Shuab Al-Iman

Branches of Faith as defined in the Qur'an and the Sunnah

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Imam: Abdul Karim Awad

Preface

In the Name of Allah, the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful

All Praises and thanks be to Allah, the Lord of the heavens and the earth and all that exists. The Lord of the universe who gives the best reward to the Godfearing and great loss to the transgressor. Allah said:
'By Al-'Asr (the time). Verily! Man is in loss. Except those who believe (in Islamic Monotheism) and do righteous good deeds, and recommend one another to the truth, and recommend one another to patience'.[1]

We praise Him and seek His help and forgiveness. We seek refuge in Allah, Subhanahu Wa-Ta'ala, from the evils of our own selves and from our wicked deeds. Whomsoever has been guided by Allah, none can misguide him, and whomsoever has been misguided by Allah, none can guide him. I bear witness that none has the right to be worshipped but Allah Alone. I further bear witness that Muhammad (SAW) is His true Prophet and Messenger, the leader of the Messengers and guide of the Faithful. We put all trust in Allah Alone. Allah is sufficient for us and He is the

[1] Surat Al-Asr

Best Helper. There is no power to resist evil except through Allah and nor does any strength do good except through Him Alone. May Allah bestow His peace and blessings on the final Prophet Muhammad (SAW), upon his pure and good family, and upon all of his Noble companions and those who follow his footsteps until the Day of Judgement. Allah the Most High said:

'O you who believe! Fear Allah (by doing all that He has ordered and by abstaining from all that He has forbidden) as He should be feared. Moreover, die not except on a state of Islam (as Muslims) with complete submission to Allah'.[2]

Allah also said:
'O you who believe! Keep your duty to Allah, fear Him, and speak (always) the truth. "He will direct you to do righteous good deeds and will forgive you your sins. Moreover, whosoever obeys Allah and His Messenger he has indeed achieved a great achievement'. [3]

Know, (May Allah Bless you):
That the most truthful speech is that of Allah's Book (The Qur'an) and that the best of guidance is that of Muhammad (SAW) . The worst of evils

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[2] Surat Ali-Imran: 102

[3] Surat Al-Ahzab: 70-71

are innovations and every innovated matter (in religion) is a Bid'ah (innovation), and every Bid'ah is a misguidance, and every means of misguidance is in the Hell-Fire.

I have chosen the name of my book (Branches of Al-Iman: 'Faith') since it covers a number of valuable subjects related to the highest act of worship particularly At-Tawheed and other considerable supplementary topics especially the Salah, Az-Zakah, Hajj, etc. and various other important matters which every Muslim must know and for every freethinking and broadminded human being whose goal is to find the truth. It includes the main classifications of religion and mankind, then brief discussion about the true nature of Islam and finally illustrates in a fluent style inclusive of the branches of Faith. These have been supported by proofs from the Holy Book (The Qur'an) and the Sunnah (Legal ways) of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) and other reliable sources. Although literature review in terms of references written by great scholars are essential, I have tried to justify the arguments presented in my book by relying basically on the identification of the words of Allah and the analysis of the Prophet's Sunnah.

It should be emphasised is that Iman (Faith) is more than a feeling or an emotion, it is an inclusive celestial expression, which includes actions of the heart, whatever is uttered by the tongue and all

practices of other organs of the body. Hence to recognise its spiritual and practical side we have to interpret the Qur'an and grasp the Sunnah (legal ways) of the Prophet (SAW). The problem with some religious practices is the confusion of spiritual experiences with religion. The chief mistake they make is to identify Faith with specific experiences and feelings. Losing one's self in prayer may feel good or uplifting, but these emotions have nothing to do with how well we communicate with our Lord, Allah. Very few Muslims associate feelings with actions based on understanding of the words of Allah and the interpretation of the Sunnah of the Prophet (SAW). Iman comprehends a whole range of acts and insights. To 'love your brother as yourself' which is considered a branch of Faith requires an extraordinary effort of self-inspiration. It cannot become a habit of the heart without a real identification of the Qur'an and authentic awareness of the Prophet's Sunnah. Therefore, Special efforts have been made to analyse and give detailed comments of branches of Iman with their textual proofs from the Qur'an and the Sunnah.

Many articles and books on Islam have been written in Arabic about branches of Faith. Some of these have dealt with the main branches of Faith and some have also provided information about the basic concepts of them. What is felt lacking in all these articles and books is the comprehensive

discussion in English of the overall branches of Faith and their broad insinuations. It is the realisation of this fact that inspired me to think of the various branches of Faith and to illustrate their practical implications. What furthered my conviction that this subject needed to be addressed was the interest shown by students of Rhyl Educational Institute who consistently inquired about a more comprehensive explanation of the branches of Iman. It was this motivation that gave me the strength to discuss in detail all aspects of Iman.

My intention in writing this book is to benefit Muslims in the West and help them to understand the real concepts of the term Faith and its significance, so that they can use them, thereby their relationship with the Creator (Allah) can be raised to a higher level of consciousness. This would enable them to live a Noble life for the benefit of their Muslim communities and the welfare of all human societies. I ask Allah to make it not only beneficial to the Muslims but also to all mankind and to make it solely for His Sake. I ask Allah by His names and Attributes to accept this work and make it a benefit for those who read it and to reward all those who participate in the distribution of this book.

In the Name of Allah, the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful

Religion and Mankind

All mankind descended from Adam (AS) and Adam has a position of honour with Allah. All mankind is created to worship Him and Him Alone. Being slaves of Allah constitutes the essence of mankind. Man cannot therefore attain to his true humanity and acquire peace of mind unless he realises this aim for which he was created. From the beginning when Allah created the heavens and the earth as well as Jinns and human beings, He clarified the wisdom of this creation by saying:
'And I (Allah) created not the Jinns and the men except they should worship Me (Alone)'.[4]

Then Allah illustrated that whoever follows this Guidance shall never fear nor shall grieve and whoever disobeys His commands indeed will be astray. Thus when the first of human beings to be created (Adam: AS) disobeyed the commands of Allah, he was sent down from Paradise to earth. Adam (AS) asked Allah for forgiveness and Allah forgave him. Therefore Allah set man on earth

[4] Surat Adh-Dharyat: 56

and provided him with guidance as to how to live. The religion, which Allah has commanded mankind to follow, consists only of His words and the sayings of His Messenger Muhammad (SAW) . Allah said:

'Say (O Muhammad (SAW)): "Obey Allah and the Messenger (Muhammad (SAW))." But if they turn away, then Allah does not like the disbelievers'.[5]

It has been narrated on the authority of Umar (RA):

"One day while we were sitting with Allah's Messenger (SAW) there came a man wearing a very white dress and having very black hair, without any signs of journey upon him, and none of us knew him. He approached until he sat before the Prophet (SAW) with his knees touching the Prophet's knees and he placed his hands on his thighs and said "O Muhammad (SAW) inform me about Islam" Allah's Messenger (SAW) replied, 'Islam is to bear witness that none has the right to be worshipped but Allah Alone and none else, and that Muhammad (SAW) is the Messenger of Allah, to offer As-Salah, to pay the Az-Zakah, to observe Saum (Fasting) during the month of Ramadan and to perform Hajj (pilgrimage) to Makkah for the one who can afford it'. The man said, "You spoke the truth". We were surprised at his asking and

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[5] Surat Al-Imran: 32

confirming at the same time. Then he further asked, "Inform me about Iman (Faith)". Allah's Messenger (SAW) replied, 'Iman is to believe in Allah, His angels, His Books, His Messengers, Day of Judgement and Al-Qadar (Divine Preordainments i.e. whatever Allah has ordained, must come to pass) of all that is good and evil. He again said, "You spoke the truth". Then he further asked, "Inform me about Ihsan (perfection)?" Allah's Messenger (SAW) replied, 'To worship Allah as if you see Him, and if you cannot achieve this state of devotion then you must consider that He surely sees you". He said, "Inform me about the Hour". He (SAW) said, "The one asked has no more knowledge of it than the questioner". He said, "Inform me about its signs". He said, "(Its signs are): the slave-girl will give birth to her mistress and you will see the barefooted, naked, impoverished sheepherders competing with each other in tall buildings". Then the stranger left. The Prophet (SAW) remained seated for quite a while, then he asked me, "O Umar, do you know who the questioner was?" I said, "Allah and His Messenger know best". He said, "That was Gabriel, he came to teach you your religion". [6]

On the basis of the above Hadeeth the concept of religion can be classified into three basic aspects: Islam, Iman and Ihsan. The meaning of each has also been fully defined through the questions of the angel 'Gabriel' and the answers of the Prophet (SAW). In a similar context, the Holy

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[6] Muslim

Qur'an has categorised mankind into three classes. This is signified in Allah's words:

'Then We gave the Book (the Qur'an) for inheritance to such of Our slaves (the followers of Muhammad (SAW)) whom We chose. Then of them are some, who wrong their ownselves, and of them are some who follow a middle course, and of them are some who are, by Allah's leave, foremost in good deeds. That (the inheritance of the Qur'an), - that is indeed a great grace'. [7]

Thus the followers of Muhammad (SAW) were chosen for the Book (the Qur'an). They were charged to obey it and to preserve and propagate its rules and regulations. However, it does not follow that they are all true and Faithful to their charge, as indeed we see too painfully around us today. Hence the Qur'an in the above Ayat classifies people of Islam into three main categories:

1. Some fall into evil-even though they are in the House of Islam. They fail to follow the Light given to them and thus wrong their own souls. This category, which is called the 'Zalim', refers to the Muslims who do not fulfil the duties of Faith.

2. Some follow a middle course. They perform all

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[7] Surat Fatir: Ayat 32

types of good deeds that Allah has ordained and abstain from all types of evil acts that Allah has forbidden. Their intentions and conducts are sound. However, they have much to do and much to learn about Islam and its virtues. This classification, called the Muqtasid are the companions of the right hand (the Mu'minun).

3. The third class (the Muhsinun) is the foremost in Faith. They worship Allah as if they see Him. They have reached the highest degree in spiritual understanding, such as the great Prophets, teachers of religion, etc. Those who are the first in time-the quickest and readiest-to accept Allah's Message. Those who perform good deeds totally for Allah's sake only without any show-off and they do them in accordance with the Sunnah (legal ways) of Allah's Messenger (SAW). They form an example to mankind as they have reached the highest achievement - the salvation. This class will be of those who are nearest to Allah.

Allah promises both groups the Mu'minoon and Muhsinoon Gardens of Bliss. They are promised the highest support, which the righteous can attain; the assertion that Allah is with them. This is indicated in Allah's words:

Truly, Allah is with those who fear Him (keep their duty unto Him), and those who are

Muhsinûn (good-doers)'.[8]

On the other hand, the wrongdoers are expected to face punishment in this world and in the Heareafter; their account is up to Allah. The wrongdoers cannot escape from the punishment of Allah. This is indicated in Allah's words:

'Say: "Tell me, if the punishment of Allah comes to you suddenly (during the night), or openly (during the day), will any be destroyed except the Zâlimûn (polytheists and wrong-doing people)?'.[9]

The Religion with Allah is Islam (Submission to His Will). So, our whole being should be saturated with Islam which has three basic principles: (i) total submission and sincere devotion to Allah: the Lord of the Heavens and the earth, (ii) establishing prayers, praise and adoration as drawing man nearer to his Lord, and (iii) the help of Allah's creation by deeds of practical charity. No thinking mind, if it only judges the matter fairly, can fail to find the truth. Human beings who live a life with religion and having faith understand the purpose of their existence. If religion is missing there will be no peace and no spiritual world can be found for those who have no faith. Whosoever accepts

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[8] Surat An-Nahl: 128

[9] Surat Al-Anam: 47

life without religion, he makesthe devil his partner and destruction will be his destiny. But the most tragic consequence of rejecting Allah's religion is that human beings become the victims of the Shaytan (Satan) who hinders them from the straight path. Allah said:

'And whosoever turns away (blinds himself) from the remembrance of the Most Beneficent (Allah) (i.e. this Qur'an and worship of Allah), We appoint for him Shaitân (Satan - devil) to be a Qarin (an intimate companion) to him'. [10]

To be given the faculty of distinguishing between right and wrong, and then reject the truth is the worst foolishness a man can commit. The true slaves of Allah are those who are true in faith, words and deeds and they have firm specific virtues:
(a) those who are patient and always show firmness and self-control;
(b) in social conduct, they are true in their dealings and sincere in their promises;
(c) they are obedient with sincere devotion in worship to Allah;
(d) their spiritual worship is profound and reflected in their outward behaviour;
(e) their love of fellow-men shows itself in their

[10] Surat Az-Zukhruf: 36

acts of charities; and
(f) their self-discipline is great and reflected in their acts of worship.
Consequently, the last of the messages, namely the Holy Qur'an, was sent to guide mankind to the path of knowledge, and to the truth about itself. Allah, reassured man that in his enlightened progress, if he were truthful in his intention and conscientious in obedience to Allah, and performed his duties, He, the Most High, would support him with a spirit of His own, open up to him and guide him to the righteous path. This, so that they may know the truth through His guidance, and by His grace, and help them to remove their doubts in consideration of their sincere determination and efforts. This is indicated in Allah's magnificent statement:

'And say [(O Muhammad (SAW)) to these polytheists and pagans etc.]: "All the praises and thanks be to Allah. He will show you His Ayât (signs, in yourselves, and in the uniAyat or punishments, etc.), and you shall recognise them. And your Lord is not unaware of what you do'.[11]

Accordingly, no one could have any excuse, and thus would Allah's appeal be established against mankind who still reject the Truth and dispute

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[11] Surat An-Naml: 93

concerning Allah after He has showed the disputants His signs. Allah said:

'And those who dispute concerning Allah (His Religion of Islamic Monotheism, with which Muhammad (SAW) has been sent), after it has been accepted (by the people), of no use is their dispute before their Lord, and on them is wrath, and for them will be a severe torment'.[12]

Our spiritual desire can only be attained by obeying Allah and His Messenger (SAW). Moral issues, the question of right and wrong in conduct, all types of deeds and words should be weighed in accordance with Islam. Then Allah will rectify our behaviour and cure any shortcomings that there may be in our knowledge and character. Our faith is not a question of words; it is deeds, which decide; each one of us is responsible for his words and deeds. If any one has doubts about the Unity of Allah, the final judge is Allah, the Lord of the Worlds, and His Pleasure is our Goal. This is the truth, and the truth lies in man's knowledge of the reality about himself.It permits him to know the realities about the world around him, and then questioning his existence, the degree of his relationships and links, and his constitutional rights, responsibilities and obligations therein. That is

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[12] Surat Ash-Shura: 16

the message of Islam, the chosen religion to all mankind. A message Allah has designated to whomever He wished from among His chosen slaves. From His own knowledge did He send down revelation to mankind, so that they may be guided to the Truth and be introduced to it. Allah said:

'And whomsoever Allah wills to guide, He opens his breast to Islam, and whomsoever He wills to send astray, He makes his breast closed and constricted, as if he is climbing up to the sky'.[13]

Allah has provided mankind with all faculties to distinguish between right and wrong, and then to deny the truth, is the worst madness that a man can execute. Man, therefore, must inevitably bring his own punishment, whether he calls himself a Jew or a Christian or any other sect. Goodness in Allah's sight is not owing to colour, or race but to sincere devotion to Him. Narrated by Abu Hurairah (RA), Allah's Messenger (SAW) said: *"Allah does not judge according to your bodies and appearance, but He scans your hearts and looks into your deeds".*[14]
Accordingly, those who reject the truth after it has been clearly explained to them are among the

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[13] Surat Al-Ana'm: 125

[14] Muslim

worst of creation, and are destined for punishment.Whereas, those who live a life of faith and struggle to remain faithfully obedient to the laws of God (Allah) are among the best of creation and will attain Allah's Pleasure. This is signified in the words of Allah:

'Verily, those who disbelieve (in the religion of Islam, the Qur'an and Prophet Muhammad (SAW) from among the people of the Scripture (Jews and Christians) and Al-Mushrikûn will abide in the Fire of Hell. They are the worst of creatures'. 6 'Verily, those who believe (in the Oneness of Allah, and in His Messenger Muhammad (SAW)) and do righteous good deeds, they are the best of creatures'.[15]

What then, is the excuse of those who turn away from religion (Islam) after Allah's Proofs and Signs have been described to them?

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[15] Surat Al- Biyinah: 6-7

The true nature of Islam

Islam is a comprehensive way of life covering every aspect of it from birth to death. It is a complete practical system in all its aspects reflecting everyday affairs of human life. It is a religion of nature. It does not require anything from man, which is against his natural instincts. The fact that Islam is the religion of nature is stated in the words of Allah:

'So set you (O Muhammad (SAW)) your face towards the religion of Hanifan (worship none but Allah) Allah's Fitrah (i.e. True man nature: Allah's Islamic Monotheism), with which He has created mankind. No change let there be in Khalq-illah (i.e. the Religion of Allah), that is the straight religion, but most of men know not'.[16]

Islam holds fast to the one crucial truth in the divine world - the Unity of God (Allah), and all Certainty springs from Him and Him Alone. It is the essence of Truth. All human beings have been created by One that is Allah: the Creator of the heavens, earth and whatever exists. All Nature worships Allah, and Islam asks for nothing unusual; but it asks that mankind follow their nature and make their will conform to Allah's Will as seen in

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[16] Surat Ar-Rum: 30

Nature, olden times and revelation. Allah's Truth is manifest, and all that is sensible and wise accepts it with no hesitation. Islam is the religion that Allah Himself has chosen for all mankind. He Said:

'This day, I have perfected your religion for you, completed My Favour upon you, and have chosen for you Islam as your religion'.[17]

It was also the religion preached by all the earlier Prophets. It has been chosen as the universal message to all mankind and taught by all the inspired Books. This is signified in Allah's words:

'Say (O Muhammad (SAW)): "We believe in Allah and in what has been sent down to us, and what was sent down to Ibrâhim (Abraham), Ismâ'il (Ishmael), Ishâque (Isaac), Ya'qûb (Jacob) and Al-Asbât [the twelve sons of Ya'qûb (Jacob)] and what was given to Mûsa (Moses), 'Iesa (Jesus) and the Prophets from their Lord. We make no distinction between one another among them and to Him (Allah) we have submitted (in Islam)'.[18]

Man is innocent, pure, true, inclined to right and virtue, and endued with true understanding about

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[17] Surat Al-Ma'idah:3

[18] Surat Ali-Imran: 84

Allah's goodness, wisdom and power. That is the true nature of man, which is signified in his love of his fellow-men and the pure worship of the One true God. Disregarding this fact man is false to his own nature, as he is false to Allah's Will and Plan. This is signified in the words of Allah:

'And whoever seeks a religion other than Islam, it will never be accepted of him, and in the Hereafter he will be one of the losers'.[18]

Thus, all human beings are inclined to believe in Allah and have to submit themselves to the religion of Allah, which is Islam. Then whoever turns away, they are those who turn away from Allah's Obedience. In this context Allah said:

'Do they seek other than the religion of Allah (the true Islamic Monotheism worshipping none but Allah Alone), while to Him submitted all creatures in the heavens and the earth, willingly or unwillingly. And to Him shall they all be returned'.[19]

Associating partners or obeying man-made ideologies besides Allah is against our true nature. Allah's Messenger Muhammad (SAW) has explained the meaning of this in the following

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[19] Surat Ali-Imran: 85

[20] Surat Ali-Imran: 83

Hadeeth. Abu Hurairah (RA) narrated: The Prophet (SAW) said:

"Every child is born on the state of Fitrah (true human nature: Islamic Monotheism) and his parents convert him to Judaism or Christianity or Paganism".[21]

Similarly, Abu Hurairah (RA) reported that Allah's Messenger said:

"By Him (Allah) in Whose Hand Muhammad (SAW)'s soul is, there is none from amongst the Jews and the Christians who hears about me and then dies without believing in the Message with which I have been sent (Islam), but he will be from the dwellers of the Hell-Fire".[22]

All Islamic rules, laws and regulations are fully in line with the needs and demands of human beings and whatever exists. It includes religious, moral, physical, economic, social and political dealings. Thus, whoever submits to (God) Allah and obeys His Commands is guaranteed to have a happy peaceful life and to win Allah's pleasure in the Hereafter.

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[21] Al-Bukhari

[22] Muslim

Islam and Life

Islam means complete surrender to the Will of Allah, the total submission of all our affairs to Him. Islam (complete submission to the creator 'Allah') was the religion passed down to the first human beings Adam and Eve (AS). But later man gradually turned away from the right path and associated Allah with imaginary gods, material objects and human beings. They departed from the path of truth or even rejected the Divine Guidance. Consequently, Allah the Most Merciful chose certain good people from among human society itself to show men the truth and guide them to the right way. Allah honoured these people by sending them revelations. These people are known as Prophets and Messengers of Allah. This is indicated in the words of Allah:
'Mankind were one community and Allah sent Prophets with glad tidings and warnings, and with them He sent the Scriptures in truth to judge between the people in matters wherein they differed'.[23]

All of them were sent the same message, and all of them had the same mission: they called people to submit to Allah Alone without associating any partner with Him in worship. Allah The Most

[23] Al-Baqarah: 213

High said:

'And We did not send any Messenger before you but We inspired him (saying) La ilaha illa Ana (none has the right to be worshipped but I 'Allah'), so worship Me Alone and none else'.[24]

Many people however, refused to accept their teachings and the Divine Guidance. Lastly, Allah sent the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) to complete the mission of the earlier Prophets. He was sent the Holy Qur'an and was ordered by Allah to teach it to all mankind who should obey him. This is indicated in Allah's statement:

'Say: (O Muhammad (SAW)): "O mankind! Verily, I am sent to you all as the Messenger of Allah - to whom belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth. None has the right to be worshipped but He; it is He who gives life and causes death. So, believe in Allah and His Messenger (Muhammad (SAW)), the Prophet who can neither read nor write. Who believes in Allah and His Words (the Qur'an, the Torah and the Gospel and Jesus who is Allah's word) and follow him so that you may be guided'.[25]

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[24] Surat Al-Anbiya: 25

[25] Surat Al-Araf: 158

This Divine Guidance is honoured in the Holy Qur'an. The message of Islam as mentioned earlier is the first message and will remain the eternal message for all mankind. Islam - complete submission and peace to Allah - the Creator of all that exists, the Ruler and the Lord of the uniAyat and the Provider of all provisions can also be considered as the way of life which provides peace, tranquillity and security to individuals, societies and to the whole world. Islam makes no distinction between the spiritual and the worldly life. Its aim is to shape both individual lives as well as society as a whole in ways which ensures that the rules, laws and regulations of Allah will really be established on earth and peace, love, justice and well-being may fill the whole uniAyat. As such, the whole uniAyat and all the creatures in it should submit to Allah alone in worship and should admit that Allah is the provider of everything and thus follow His guidance and His commands in all deeds. Allah the Almighty said:

'I seek not any provision from them nor do I ask that they should feed Me. Verily, Allah is the All-provider, Owner of Power, _ the Most Strong'.[26]

Everything in this world belongs to Allah. As such, people's life and wealth belong to Him as

[26] Surat Adh-Dhariyat: 57-58

He created them and has entrusted them to every man for his use. A person, who uses what Allah has bestowed on him according to Allah's commands, remaining honest and loyal to Him and acknowledges His sovereignty, will get in return Allah's promise of eternal bliss in Paradise. A person, who rebels against Allah and rejects to enter into this contract, will get in return Allah's anger and punishment. If a person does not uses the powers and resources in the way Allah has prescribed to him, using them instead in pursuits which Allah has forbidden, it is clear that he has not pledged his life and property to Allah. Thus, human beings can never break away from the Law of their Lord. As soon as they commit any action against the Creator, they must submit to their Lord and ask forgiveness for their error. The moral issues of a society, its social aspects, its political order, its legal system and its national and international plans and strategies must all be in tune with the guidance revealed by Allah.

Allah's mercy is in and for all things. All nature sub serves a common purpose, which is for the good of all His creatures. Our faculties and our understandings are all instances of His grace and mercy. Each unit or factor among his creatures benefits from the others and receives them as Allah's mercy. Allah's mercy is universal, while His punishment is reserved for those who turn sharply from His plan and go out of His path.

Therefore, if any society sticks honestly to the commands of Allah and shapes its life in accordance to His teachings, recognising Allah as its Sovereign, His guidance as supreme, His orders as absolute Law, peace, blessings, tranquillity, success and prosperity will be its code. Prosperity in its general sense as well as in its spiritual sense will shape the system of such society. In the general sense, it means that right conduct is the only door to happiness and well-being. In the spiritual sense, it means that Faith and its fruits are the only gates to salvation. History bears witness that whenever a human society is built on the basis of disbelief, the whole society was punished by Allah. The Holy Qur'an shows that any nation or individuals, however mighty, prosperous, or firmly established they may be, cannot survive if they break the Law of Allah. Think of what happened to A'ad, Thamud and Fir'aun (Pharoah)? Look at how Allah dealt with them when they made mischief in the lands and transgressed Allah's Law. Allah said:

'Did you (O Muhammad (SAW)) not see (thought) how your Lord dealt with 'Ad (people)? 'Who were very tall like lofty pillars, The like of which were not created in the land? And (with) Thamud (people), who cut (hewed) out rocks in the valley (to make dwellings)? And (with) Fir'aun (Pharaoh), who had pegs (who used to torture men by binding them to pegs)? Who did transgress

beyond bounds in the lands (in the disobedience of Allah). And made therein much mischief. So your Lord poured on them different kinds of severe torment. Verily, your Lord is Ever Watchful (over them)'.[27]

Likewise, think of what happened to the people of Arabia: gambling, wine, tribal warfare and dispute, aggression and murdering were their main characters and principles when they had no Faith. But as soon as they accepted Islam and believed in Allah and His Messenger, they became the most ideal and peaceful society, free of social and moral evils. This is signified in the words of Allah:

'He it is Who sent among the unlettered ones a Messenger (Muhammad (SAW)) from among themselves, reciting to them His Ayats, purifying them (from the filth of disbelief and polytheism), and teaching them the Book (this Qur'an, Islamic laws and Islamic jurisprudence) and Al-Hikmah (As-Sunnah: legal ways, orders, acts of worship, etc. of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) . And verily, they had been before in manifest error'.[28]

'Say: "O Allah! Possessor of the kingdom,

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[27] Surat Al-Fajr: 6-14

[28] Surat Al-Jumu'ah: 2

You give the kingdom to whom You will, and You take the kingdom from whom You will, and You endue with honour whom You will, and You humiliate whom You will'.[29]

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[29] Surat Al-Imran: 25-26

The basic concepts of Iman (Faith)

Our highest spiritual aspiration should be the hope of meeting Allah and attaining His Pleasure. To uphold such a hope, we have to have strong Faith and submit our wills to Allah. Only those are faithful who have believed in Allah and His Messenger (SAW), and have never since doubted. This is indicated in Allah's words:

'Only those are the believers who have believed in Allah and His Messenger, and afterward doubt not but strive with their wealth and their lives for the Cause of Allah. Those! They are the truthful'.[30]

Faith, which should stem from our hearts and minds, requires absolute obedience to Allah and entire submission of our being to Him. This is what we have to prove if Faith has any meaning to us. The Qur'an has informed us about the bedouins (the desert Arabs) who were somewhat shaky in their faith. Faith has not entered their hearts and they only said it with their tongues. This is signified in the words of Allah:

'The bedouins say: "We believe." Say: "You

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[30] Surat Al-Hujurat: 15

believe not but you only say, 'We have surrendered (in Islam),' for Faith has not yet entered your hearts'.[31]

This clearly emphasizes that Faith is not only a word uttered by mouth or a simple word in Islam, Faith is a comprehensive term and it covers a large number of Divine concepts, which are to be taken together. Faith is not merely a matter of words. Allah knows the innermost motives and secrets of our hearts, and none can deceive Him by assigning a certain label to himself. Allah the Most High said:
'And of mankind, there are some who say: "We believe in Allah and the last Day" while in fact they believe not.. They (think to) deceive Allah and those who believe while they only deceive themselves, and they perceive (it) not'.[32]

We must realise the presence and goodness of Allah. When we do so, the scales fall from our eyes: all the falseness and transitory nature of the present could not enslave us, for we see the Last Day as if it were to-day. We also see Allah's influence in His world and in us. His Angels, His Messengers and His Message are no longer far from us, but come within our knowledge and

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[31] Surat Al-Hujurat: 14

[32] Surat Al-Baqarah: 8-9

experience.

The term Faith which gives you potential spirit and energy includes vast meanings, which comprises confirmation by the heart, admitting by the tongue and actions by all parts of the body. It increases by obedience and decreases by sin. Whenever the believers see one Sign of Allah after another and with each their Faith is strengthened and confirmed. This is indicated in Allah's words:

'The believers are only those who, when Allah is mentioned, feel a fear in their hearts and when His Ayats (this Qur'an) are recited unto them, they (i.e. the Ayats) increase their Faith; and they put their trust in their Lord (Alone)'.33

To the believers every new aspect of Allah's Truth as revealed increases their Faith, thereby turning in gratitude to their Lord. Having Faith is having principles. Having strong belief our Faith in Allah remains strong and unshakeable. Righteousness comes from a secure Faith and from sincere devotion to Allah and from unselfish service to mankind. Allah said:

And whenever there comes down a Surat

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33 Surat An-Anfal: 2

(chapter from the Qur'an), some of them (hypocrites) say: "Which of you has had his Faith increased by it?" As for those who believe, it has increased their Faith, and they rejoice.[34]

The man of Faith who backs his belief by righteous conduct is like the man of clear vision, who sees things in their true perception and walks with firm steps in the Way of Allah. Arising from that is Allah's help and protection. He Subhanahu Wa-Ta'ala will bring people of Faith out from the depth of darkness into light. This is signified in Allah's words:

'Allah is the Walî (Protector or Guardian) of those who believe. He brings them out from darkness into light. But as for those who disbelieve, their Auliyâ (supporters and helpers) are Tâghût [false deities and false leaders, etc.], they bring them out from light into darkness. Those are the dwellers of the Fire, and they will abide therein forever'.[35]

Our Prophet Muhammad (SAW) identified the true concept of Iman (Faith). He has informed us that Iman has more than seventy branches. This is signified in the Hadeeth narrated by Abu Hurairah

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[34] Surat At-Taubah: 124

[35] Surat Al-Baqarah: 257

(RA), the Prophet (SAW) said:

"Al-Iman (Faith) consists of more than seventy branches (i.e. parts), the most excellent of which is the declaration of La Ilaha illa Allah (None has the right to be worshipped except Allah), and the humblest of which is the removal of what is harmful from the road, and Al-Hayha (modesty, self-respect, honour, etc.) is a part of Faith".[36]

I contemplated on the meaning of this Hadeeth for a long time and I realised the valuable and concise potential concepts it includes. The above Hadeeth covers useful information related to the Muslims' Faith and includes what the seeker of knowledge and every Muslim needs. Understanding the various branches of Faith and acting upon them can be considered as the means of achieving ultimate happiness in this life and the Hereafter for the individual as well as the society. This is shown in the words of Allah The Most High:

'Whoever works righteousness, whether male or female, while he or she is a true believer (of Islamic Monotheism) verily, to him We will give a good life (in this world with respect, contentment and lawful provision), and We shall pay them certainly a reward in propor

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[36] Al-Bukhari

tion to the best of what they used to do'.[37]

The above Ayat evidently illustrates the significance of performing righteous deeds that are based mainly on true Iman (Faith). Faith, if truthful and straight, means appropriate conduct. When the two corroborate each other, the grace of Allah renovates our life. Instead of being worried and distressed, we have peace and contentment; instead of being devastated by evil, we enjoy tranquillity and accomplish purity and cleanliness. May Allah guide us and grant us the correct understanding and application of Faith.

Having examined the basic concepts of Iman, a complete as possible number of its branches will be discussed.

[37] Surat An-Nahl: 97

Branches of Iman (Faith)

The branches of Iman (Faith) can be classified into three broad categories. The first includes the intention (confession and actions of the heart), the second concerns the declaration of the tongue and the third includes the action of the remaining parts of the body. These three categories will be explained and the branches of Iman (Faith), which they include, will be discussed and demonstrated.

Confession and Actions of the Heart

It is believed that the foundation or the root of Iman is in the heart. This has been supported by a large number of Ayats from the Qur'an and a number of Hadeeth of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) . The following are just examples to illustrate this point. Allah said:

'Whoever disbelieved in Allah after his belief, except him who is forced thereto and whose heart is at rest with Faith - but such as open their breasts to disbelief - on them is wrath from Allah, and theirs will be a great torment'.[38]

In the above Ayat Allah has considered actions of

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[38] Surat An-Nahl: 106

the heart as the distinctive point between disbelief and Iman (Faith). Again Allah said:

'O Messenger (Muhammad (SAW))! Let not those who hurry to fall into disbelief grieve you, of such who say: "We believe" with their mouths but their hearts have no Faith'.[39]

In the above Ayat belief is made in the heart. Allah stresses the fact that if He seals one's heart he is a great loser. Al-Numan bin Bashir (RA) narrated: I heard Allah's Messenger (SAW) saying:

"Both legal and illegal things are evident but between them there are doubtful (unclear) things, and most of the people have no knowledge about them. So whoever saves himself from these doubtful things, he saves his religion and his honour. And whoever indulges in these doubtful things, is like a shepherd who grazes (his animals) near the Hima (private pasture) of someone else, and at any moment he is liable to get in it. O people! Beware! Every king has a Hima and the Hima of Allah on the earth is His illegal (forbidden) things. Beware! There is a piece of flesh in the body, if it becomes good (reformed), the whole body becomes good but if it gets spoilt the whole body gets spoilt and that is the heart".[40]

The above Hadeeth illustrates several spiritual

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[39] Surat Al-Ma'idah: 41

[40] Al-Bukhari

issues and one of them is the significance and the superiority of the heart, which if it is perfect the whole body becomes good. Thus the actions of the heart are very significant and they include articles of Faith that can be categorised into the following:

1.1. Belief in Allah

The basic concept of belief is the idea of Unity or Oneness -that there is only one God and only one Law in this uniAyat. The declaration of La Ilaha illa Allah (None has the right to be worshipped but Allah) is considered by the Prophet (SAW) as the most outstanding branch of Iman (Faith). This is called Tawheed, which is the first and most important foundation of Iman. It means that Allah is the cause and source of all authority, might and all goodness, and our advancement depends upon placing our entire lives into accord with His Will.

Allah has a fundamental principle behind this creation, which is worshipping Him Alone 'Tawheed'. This is indicated in Allah's words:

'And I (Allah) created not the Jinns and humans except they should worship Me Alone'.[41]

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[41] Surat Adh-Dhariyat: 56

The belief in Allah Alone 'Tawheed' brings a high level of discipline to human hearts and peace in their minds. It removes all weaknesses from our thoughts and creates great confidence in us. It gives us peace, dignity and self-respect. This divine term 'Tawheed' invites us to be slaves to the Creator and to obey His commands and in this way saves us from the humility to others. Believing in Allah Alone 'Tawheed' mainly implies three aspects:

1.1.1. Belief in the Oneness of the Lordship of Allah (Tawheed ar-Rububiyya)

Each Muslim must confess with his/her heart that there is only one Lord for the entire uniAyat, the Creator (of everything), is Allah. It is that he has to say: "I testify that the Creator of all the uniAyat including the stars, the planets, the sun, the moon, the heavens, the earth with all its known and unknown forms of life, is Allah. Allah said:

'Say (O Muhammad (SAW)): He is Allah, the One. Allah As-Samad (The Self-Sufficient Master, Whom all creatures need). He begets not, nor was He begotten. And there is none co-equal or comparable unto Him'.[42]

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[42] Surat Al-Ikhlas: 1-4

He is the Organiser and Planner of all affairs. He is alone the Sustainer, and the Giver of security, etc. We must believe that there is no creature that moves in the earth but its provision depends on Allah. This is indicated in Allah's words:

'And no (moving) living creature is there on the earth but its provision is due from Allah'.[43]

We also believe that Allah cures all diseases. He Alone gives life and causes death. Allah said:

'Who has created me, and it is He Who guides me; And it is He Who feeds me and gives me to drink; And when I am ill, it is He Who cures me; And Who will cause me to die, and then will bring me to life (again)'.[44]

We have to believe that all affairs return to Allah and He is the original Cause of all things. Every aspect of human life is sustained, developed and maintained by the grace and providence of Allah. This is signified in Allah's words:

'O mankind! Remember the Grace of Allah upon you! Is there any creator other than Allah who provides for you from the sky (rain) and the earth? Lâ ilaha illa Huwa (none has

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[43] Surat Hud: 6

[44] Surat Ash-Shura: 78-81

the right to be worshipped but He). How then are you turning away (from Him)?'.[45]

We must believe that success and victory is in the Hand of Allah. None can stop what Allah gives and none can give what Allah prevents. Allah said:

'And there is no victory except from Allah, the All-Mighty, the All-Wise'.[46]

We must also believe that to Allah belongs whatsoever in the heavens and in the earth and He is able to do all things. He gives sovereignty to whom He pleases and takes away sovereignty from whom He pleases; He exalts whom He wills and abases whom He wills. In His hand is all good and He has power over everything. Allah Said:

'Allah La ilaha illa Huwa (none has the right to be worshiped but He), the Ever Living, the One Who sustains and protects all that exists. Neither slumber, nor sleep overtakes Him. To Him belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in earth. Who is he that can intercede with Him except with His Permission? He knows what happens to them (His creatures) in this world, and what will happen to them in the Hereafter. And they will never

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[45] Surat Fatir: 3

[46] Surat Al-Imran: 126

compass anything of His Knowledge except that which He wills. His Kursi extends over the heavens and the earth, and He feels no fatigue in guarding and preserving them. And He is the Most High, the Most Great'.[47]

1.1.2. Belief in the Oneness of the Worship of Allah (Tawheed al-Uluhiyya)

Each Muslim must confess with his/her heart that none has the right to be worshipped (e.g. praying, invoking, asking for help, swearing, slaughtering sacrifice, fasting, pilgrimage, etc.) but Allah. He is the True God and every other deity is false. In this respect Allah said:

'And verily, We have sent among every Ummah (community, nation) a Messenger (proclaiming): "Worship Allah (Alone), and avoid (or keep away from) Tâghût (all false deities, etc. i.e. do not worship Tâghût besides Allah)'.[48]

Allah Himself is a witness of His Unity. All of His Creation and all Nature glorify His Exalted Power and His Wisdom. The proof of the testification of faith is mentioned in the words of Allah

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[47] Surat Al-Baqarah: 255

[48] Surat An-Nahl: 36

the All-Mighty, the All-Wise:

'Allah bears witness that Lâ ilaha illa Huwa (none has the right to be worshipped but He), and the angels, and those having knowledge (also give this witness); (He is always) maintaining His creation in Justice. Lâ ilaha illa Huwa (none has the right to be worshipped but He), the All-Mighty, the All-Wise'.[49]

Thus all kinds of worship are meant for Allah and (none else, whether it be an angel, Messenger, Prophet, idol, the moon and all other kinds of false deities). This is indicated in the words of Allah:

'Say (O Muhammad (SAW)): Verily, my prayer, my sacrifice, my living, and my dying are for Allah, the Lord of the Al-Lamin (mankind, Jinns and all that exists); He has no partner. And of this I have been commanded, and I am the first of the Muslims'.[50]

We believe in His Oneness, that is, He has no associate in His Divinity. So pray to none but Allah, invoke none but Allah, ask for help from none (unseen) but Allah, swear by none but Allah, offer your sacrifice to none but Allah, seeking

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[49] Surat Ali-Imran: 18

[50] Surat Al-Ana'm: 162-163

guidance from none but Allah, etc. and that means - all that Allah and His Messenger Muhammad (SAW) order you to do, in His Book, The Qur'an and in the Sunnah (legal ways of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) you must do, and all that Allah and His Messenger (SAW) forbid you, you must not do. In this respect Allah said:

'You (Alone) we worship, and You (Alone) we ask for help (for each and everything), Guide us to the Straight Way'.[51]

Muadh bin Jabal narrated: The Prophet (SAW) said:

"O Muadh! Do you know what Allah's right upon His slaves is? I said Allah and His Messenger know best. The Prophet (SAW) said: 'To worship Him (Allah) Alone and to join none in worship with Him. Do you know what their right upon Him is'? I replied Allah and His Messenger know best. The Prophet (SAW) said 'Not to punish them if they do so".[52]

Belief in Allah, in His Lordship and His Worship instils in the individual Allah's love. His glorification that result in performing Allah's instructions and avoiding His proscriptions are the means of achieving ultimate happiness in this life and the

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[51] Surat Al-Fatiha: 5-6

[52] Al-Bukhari

Hereafter for the individual as well as the society. Allah said:

'Whoever works righteousness, whether male or female, while he/she is a true believer (of Islam), verily to him We will give a good life (in this world with respect, contentment and lawful provision), and We shall pay them certainly a reward in proportion to the best of what they used to do (i.e. Paradise in the Hereafter)'.[53]

On the other hand, disbelief in the Oneness of the Lordship of Allah (Tawheed ar-Rububiyya) or in the Oneness of the Worship of Allah (Tawheed al-Uluhiyya) nullifies Iman (Faith).

1.1.3. Belief in the Names and the Qualities of Allah (Tawheed al-Asma wa-Sifat)

Each Muslim must confess with the heart that he/she testifies that all the best of names and the most perfect qualities with which Allah has named or qualified Himself in His Book (i.e. the Qur'an) or as His Prophet Muhammad (SAW) has named or qualified Him are for Allah Alone. Denial or deprecation of any of Allah's Names or Attributes established in the Qur'an and the authentic Sunnah nullifies Iman (Faith). Allah said:

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[53] Surat An-Nahl: 96

'He is Allah, the Creator, the Inventor of all things, the Bestower of forms. To Him belong the Best names. All that is in the heavens and the earth glorify Him. And He is the All-Mighty, the All-Wise'.[54]

Thus, we have to confirm that:

- We must not name or qualify Allah except with what He or His Messenger (SAW) have named or qualified Him with. This is signified in Allah's words:

'There is nothing like unto Him, and He is the All-Hearer, the All-Seer'.[55]

- None can be named or qualified with the Names or Qualifications of Allah;
- We must confirm all of Allah's Qualifications, which Allah has stated in His Book (the Qur'an) or mentioned through His Messenger (SAW) without changing them or ignoring them completely or twisting the meanings or giving resemblance to any of the created things. This is shown in the words of Allah:

'So put not forward similitudes for Allah (as there is nothing similar to Him, nor He

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[54] Surat Al-Hashr: 24

[55] Surat Ash-Shura: 11

resembles anything). Truly! Allah knows and you know not'.[56]

We believe that Allah is with His creatures while He is still over His Throne. Allah said:

'The Most Beneficent (Allah) Istawa (rose over) the (Mighty) Throne (in a manner that suits His Majesty)'[57]

He is with us by His knowledge, His power and His help, not by His Personal-Self (Bi-dhatihi). He is very close to each individual. The Qur'an says that Allah is nearer to man than his jugular vein.

'And indeed We have created man, and We know what his ownself whispers to him. And we are nearer to him than his jugular vein (by Our Knowledge)'.[58]

Allah knows our conditions, hears us, and is well acquainted with our deeds. This knowledge that Allah is always with his slaves enables us to feel His Presence and pervades all our actions and attitudes. A reality can be felt in the lives of ordinary people who act righteously and

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[56] Surat An-Nahl: 74

[57] Surat Ta-ha: 5

[58] Surat Qaf: 16

honourably, respecting others, contributing to the honour and wealth of society, and doing everything for Allah's pleasure. Allah said:

'His Commands descends between them (heavens and earth), that you may know that Allah has the power over all things, and that Allah surrounds all things in His knowledge'.[56]

It is not like as some people think that Allah is present here, there or everywhere. Whoever says this is considered to be astray because he attributes to Allah certain qualities, which do not apply to Him. Likewise, Allah the Most High also said:

'To one whom I have created with Both My Hands'.[60]

This holy Ayat confirms that Allah has hands, but we must believe that there is no similarity to them. This should be the Faith of all believers. It was the Faith of all the Prophets of Allah, from Adam (AS) until the last of the Prophets Muhammad (SAW) . Narrated Abu Hurairah (RA), I heard Allah's Messenger (SAW) saying:

"On the Day of Resurrection, Allah will grasp the whole

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[59] Surat At-Talaq: 12

[60] Surat Saad: 75

planet of earth (by His Hand), and roll all the heavens up with His Right Hand, and then He will say, 'I am the King; where are the kings of the earth?'".61

We believe in all that has been revealed in Allah's Book (the Qur'an) as regards the (Sifat) qualities of Allah, for instance: His Face, Eyes, Hands, His Istawa (rising over), His Throne and others or all that Allah's Messenger (SAW) qualified Him with. There are eleven Ayats of the Qur'an in which Allah's Face is mentioned, and other Ayats, which mention other body parts. For instance Allah said:

'Except only the desire to seek the Face (Countenance) of his Lord, the Most High'.62

It is necessary to stress the fact that we should not misinterpret that Allah has a body like a human, because He is unlike anything in His creation.

As regards His Qualities like His coming (Nuzul), or His laughing and others, the Messenger of Allah (SAW) told us that Allah descends to the near sky before the Last third of every night and says:

'who prays to Me and I will answer his prayers, who asks Me and I will give him, who

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61 Al-Bukhari

62 Surat Al-Lail: 20

asks My forgiveness and I will forgive him'.[63]

All religious scholars believe in Allah's Qualities, without Ta'weel (interpreting their meanings into different things etc.) or Tashbeeh (giving resemblance or similarity to any of the creatures) or Ta'teel (completely ignoring or denying them i.e., there is no Face or Eyes or Hands etc. for Allah). These Qualities suit only Allah Alone, and He does not resemble any of His creatures. As Allah's Statement in the Qur'an:

'There is nothing like unto Him and He is the All-Hearer, the All-Seer'.[64]

We believe that Allah speaks whatever He pleases whenever He pleases and to whomsoever He pleases. Allah said:

'And Messengers We have mentioned to you before, and Messengers We have not mentioned to you, - and to Moses Allah spoke directly'.[65]

These beautiful Divine Qualities of Allah have their influence on us and on our lives and behaviours. Allah is the Most Beneficent, so we try to

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[63] Al-Bukhari and Muslim

[64] Surat Ash-Shura: 11

[65] Surat An-Nisa: 164

help others. He is the Most Merciful, so we try to be kind and merciful to others. He is the Just, so we try to be just to others.

Believing in Allah and standing firm and straight on the Islamic Faith as it is commanded develops in a person:

1. Self-confidence, a feeling of security and a sense of entering Paradise, which can never fail. This is signified by Allah's words:

'Verily, those who say: "Our Lord is (only) Allah," and thereafter Istaqâmû (i.e. stood firm and straight on the Islamic Faith of Monotheism by abstaining from all kinds of sins and evil deeds which Allah has forbidden and by performing all kinds of good deeds which He has ordained), on them shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve. Such shall be the dwellers of Paradise, abiding therein (forever), a reward for what they used to do'.[66]

2. A sense of protection from Allah in the life of this world and in the Hereafter, which is beyond any shadow of doubt. This is indicated in Allah's words:

'We have been your friends in the life of this

[66] Surat Al-Ahqaf: 13-14

world and are (so) in the Hereafter. Therein you shall have (all), your inner-selves desire, and therein you shall have (all) for which you ask for'.[67]

Consequently no one ought to entertain false concepts about Allah: the Lord of the heavens and of the earth, and all that is between them, and Lord of every point of the sun's risings. Allah is One in the sense that He is Unique, and there is nothing like Him anywhere with which He could be compared. Allah is not a father and He does not have children. Allah is the Eternal and never dies; the Guide and Protector to whom everyone calls when they are in desperate need of help. Allah said:

'Say (O Muhammad (SAW)): "He is Allah, (the) One" Allah-us-Samad (The Self-Sufficient Master, Whom all creatures need, He neither eats nor drinks). "He begets not, 3 nor was He begotten; "And there is none co-equal or comparable unto Him'.[68]

He cannot be divided into parts, such as in the Christian concept of the trinity in which, somehow, three gods or parts of God are believed to merge into one. For by joining false gods in our

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[67] Surat Al-Ikhlas

[68] Surat Fussilat: 31

notions of worship, we contaminate and degrade our conception of ourselves and the duty we owe to Allah: our Creator, to Whom we have to give a final account of life and conduct. Allah is not in need for anyone, In fact, if we worship idols or human beings, or any creatures, or some spirits, we are not only doing aggression to Truth, but we are causing conflict in the unity and harmony of the natural surroundings.

O Allah! Grant us Your Infinite Mercy. We ask you for Your Love, the love of those who love You, and deeds, which will cause us to attain Your Love. O Allah! Make Your Love dearer to us than ourselves, our families and cool water.

1.2. Belief in the Angels

The fact that believing in the angels is a part of faith has been signified in Allah's words and the long Hadeeth mentioned earlier. (See section: Religion and mankind). Allah said:

'The Messenger (Muhammad (SAW) (SAW)) believes in what has been sent down to him from his Lord, and (so do) the believers. Each one believes in Allah, His Angels, His Books, and His Messengers. They say, "We make no distinction between one another of His Messengers" - and they say, "We hear, and we obey. (We seek) Your Forgiveness, our Lord,

and to You is the return (of all)'.[69]

Therefore, each Muslim must believe in the existence of the angels of Allah and that they are 'honoured slaves'. Love and admiration for the angels should be accentuated because of what they are doing, namely worshipping Allah in the best possible manner and praying for the believers. They rejoice Allah's Praises night and day, and they never ever slacken to do so. This is indicated in Allah's Statement:

'And those who are near Him (i.e. the angels) are not too proud to worship Him, nor are they weary (of His worship). 'They (i.e. the angels) glorify His Praises night and day, (and) they never slacken (to do so)'.[70]

The angels are glorious creatures of light, high in the Heavens, near the Throne of Allah. They have been created just as Allah did with all the other creatures. The angels are infinite and no one can know their numbers except Allah. Allah has made them perfectly obedient to Him and devoted to constant worship of Him. They have conformed to Allah's Will and obeyed His Law. This is signified in the words of Allah:

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[69] Surat Al-Baqarah: 285

[70] Surat Al-Anbiya: 19-20

'They (Angels) speak not until He has spoken, and they act on His Command'.[71]

They never say anything before receiving the command of Allah to say it and their acts are similarly conditioned. They are no more than slaves of Allah: they are raised to honour, and therefore they deserve our supreme respect and reverence, but not our worship. Allah said:

'And they say: 'The Most Beneficent (Allah) has begotten a son (or children)' Glory to Him. They (those whom they call children of Allah i.e. the angels, are but honoured slaves'.[72]

We believe that the angels are assigned certain functions and duties besides praising Allah.. Among the angels is Gabriel who is entrusted with revelation. He brings it down from Allah to whomever Allah wishes among His Prophets and Messengers. Among them is Michael who is in charge of rain and plantation. Among them is Israfeel who is in charge of blowing the Horn at the time of Resurrection. Among them is the angel of death (Azra'il) who takes out people's souls at the time of death. This is indicated in Allah's words:

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[71] Surat Al-Anbiya: 27

[72] Surat Al-Anbiya: 26

'Say: The angel of death, who is set over you, will take your souls, then you shall be brought to your Lord'.[73]

Among other angels are the guardians of the Fire whose numbers are fixed by Allah. This is indicated in Allah's words:

'And We have set none but angels as guardians of the Fire, and We have fixed their number (19) only as a trial for the disbelievers'.[74]

We have been told about Malik the gate-keeper of Hell. The wrong-doers who will suffer agony in Hell-fire will call him to ask his Lord to end their agony. But he will reply that they will abide in it because they rejected the truth, which has been brought to them. This is signified in Allah's words:

'And they will cry: 'O Malik. Let your Lord make an end of us'. He will say: ' Verily you shall abide forever'.[75]

Allah created man, and gave him his limited free-will. Allah knows the innermost state of a man. He is the All-hearer and All-seer. He is nearer to

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[73] Surat As-Sajdah: 11

[74] Surat Al-Muddathir: 31

[75] Surat Az-Zukhruf: 77

a man than the man's own jugular vein. Two angels are constantly recording one's words and deeds. One angel sits on the right side and records his/her good deeds and the other on the left recording his/her bad deeds. This is indicated in Allah's words:

'Remember that the two receivers (recording angels) receive (each human being after he or she has attained the age of puberty), one sitting on the right and one on the left (to note his or her actions)'[76]

A Muslim should believe that each word uttered by him/her is instantly recorded by a guardian (Raqib). Allah said:

'Not a word does he (or she) utter, but there is a watcher by him ready (to record it)'.[77]

The reference to the angels has also been emphasised in a number of the Prophet's sayings. Narrated Abu Hurairah (RA), the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) said:

"Angels keep on descending from and ascending to the heaven in turn, some at night and some by daytime, and all of them assemble together at the time of the Fajr and Asr

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[76] Surat Qaf: 17

[77] Surat Qaf: 18

prayers. Then those who have stayed with you overnight ascend unto Allah Who asks them (and He knows the answer better than they): "How have you left My slaves?" They reply "we left them while they were praying and we came to them while they were praying".[78]

It has also been narrated by Abu Hurairah (RA), the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) said:

"On every Friday the angels take their stand at every gate of the mosque to write the names of the people chronologically (i.e. according to the time of their arrival for the Friday prayer), and when the Imam sits on the pulpit they fold up their scrolls and get ready to listen to the Khutba (religious sermon)".[79]

Some other angels (Munkar and Nakeer) are in charge of questioning the dead after they are put in their graves. The angels ask them about their Lord, religion and their Prophet. Some of the angels are in charge of the dwellers of Paradise who constantly greet them saying 'Peace unto you'. This is indicated in Allah's words:

'Salamun Alaikum (Peace be upon you) for that you persevered in patience! Excellent indeed is the final home'.[80]

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[78] Al-Bukhari

[79] Al-Bukhari

[80] Surat Ar-Ra'd: 24

The angels are concealed from us, we cannot see them. Allah may show them to some of His slaves. Our Prophet Muhammad (SAW) saw Gabriel in his real shape with six hundred wings that covered the horizons (Bukhari and Muslim). Denial of the existence of the angels or deprecating their functions or denying them being created from light for obeying Allah's orders nullifies Iman (Faith). Allah said:

'Whoever is an enemy to Allah, His Angels, His Messengers, Jibrael (Gabriel) and Mikael (Michael), then verily, Allah is an enemy to the disbelievers'.[81]

1.3. Belief in Allah's Books/Scriptures:

As indicated earlier, each Muslim must believe that Allah revealed Books/Scriptures to His Messengers as proof against mankind and guidance for the righteous workers. Allah said:

'Indeed We have sent Our Messengers with clear proofs, and revealed with them the Scripture and the Balance (justice), mankind may keep up justice'.[82]

These Holy Books aim to purify mankind, to

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[81] Surat Al-Baqarah: 98

[82] Surat Al-Hadeed: 25

teach them wisdom and to enable them to distinguish between truth and false. They also aim to bring mankind out from darkness into light. This is indicated in Allah's words:

'O people of the Scripture (Jews and Christians)! Now has come to you Our Messenger (Muhammad SAW) explaining to you much of that which you used to hide from the Scripture and passing over (i.e. leaving out without explaining) much. Indeed, there has come to you from Allah a light (Prophet Muhammad SAW) and a plain Book (this Qur'an). 'Wherewith Allah guides all those who seek His Good Pleasure to ways of peace, and He brings them out of darkness by His Will unto light and guides them to a Straight Way (Islamic Monotheism)'.[83]

It has also been mentioned that Allah sent Messengers and provided them with Books in truth to judge between people in matters wherein they differed and to establish justice. Allah said

'Indeed We have sent Our Messengers with clear proofs, and revealed with them the Scripture and the Balance (justice), mankind may keep up justice'. [84]

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[83] Surat Al-Ma'idah: 15-16

[84] Surat Al-Hadid: 25

Among these Books, we know the following:

1. The Torah, which was revealed to Moses (AS). Allah said:

'Verily, We did send down the Torah, therein was guidance and light, by its laws the Jews have been judged by the Prophets who submitted themselves to Allah's Will, the rabbis and the priests for to them was entrusted the protection of Allah's Book, and they were witness thereto'.[85]

2. The Gospel, which Allah revealed to Jesus (AS). It is confirmation of the Torah and a completion to it. Allah said:

'And in their footsteps, We sent Jesus, son of Mary, confirming the Torah that had come before him, and We gave him the Gospel, in which was guidance and light and confirmation of the Torah that had come before it, a guidance and an admonition for the pious'.[86]

3. The Zaboor (Psalms), which Allah gave to David, (AS). Allah said:

'And your Lord knows best all who are in the

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[85] Surat Al-Maidah: 44

[86] Surat Al-Maidah: 46

heavens and the earth. And indeed, We have preferred some of the Prophets above others, and to David we gave the Psalms'.[87]

4. The Scriptures of Abraham and Moses (AS). Allah said:

'Verily! This is in the former Scriptures; The Scriptures of Abraham and Moses'.[88]

5. The Glorious Qur'an, which was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) . This is signified in Allah's words:

'The month of Ramadan in which was revealed the Qur'an, a guidance for mankind and clear proofs for the guidance and the criterion (between right and wrong)'.[89]

Denial of any of these Holy Books/Scriptures or deprecation of them nullifies Iman (Faith). Being words from Allah, they were free from any imperfection or errors at the time of their revelation. However, it should be taken into consideration that all of Books/Scriptures preceding the Qur'an underwent distortion, addition and omission by their people. Allah said:

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[87] Surat Al-Isra: 55

[88] Surat Al-Ala: 18-19

[89] Surat Al-Baqarah: 185

'Among those who are Jews, there are some who displace words from their right places'.[90]

Allah the Most High also said:

'Then woe to those who write the Book with their hands and then say, 'this is from Allah' to purchase with it a little price! Woe to them for what their hands have written and woe to them for that they earn thereby'.[91]

Likewise Allah said:

'And verily, among them is a party who distort the Book with their tongues (as they read), so that you may think it is from the Book, but it is not from the Book, and they say: "This is from Allah, but it is not from Allah; and they speak a lie against Allah while they know it'.[92]

The Holy Book (The Qur'an) confirms the Books that were before it and stands as a guardian over them. This is indicated in the words of Allah:

'And We have sent down to you (Muhammad (SAW)) the Book (the Qur'an) as an

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[90] Surat An-Nisa: 46

[91] Surat Al-Baqarah: 79

[92] Surat Al-Imran: 78

exposition of everything, a guidance, a mercy, and glad tidings for those who have submitted themselves (to Allah as Muslims)'.[93]

Thus, by the Qur'an Allah abrogated all the previous Books. It is obligatory for every human being to believe in the Qur'an and follow its teachings. Allah said:

'And this is a blessed Book (the Qur'an) which We have sent down, so follow it and fear Allah (i.e. do not disobey His Orders), that you may receive mercy (i.e. saved from the torment of Hell)'.[94]

Allah has also guaranteed its protection from any play or mischievous distortion. Allah said:

'Verily, We: It is We Who have sent down the Dhiker (i.e. the Qur'an) and surely, We will guard it (from corruption)'.[95]

This Ayat clearly illustrates a challenge to mankind and everyone is obliged to believe in the miracles of this Qur'an. Falsehood cannot be added to it nor can a portion be removed from it. It is a clear fact that more than 1400 years have elapsed and

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[93] Surat An-Nahl: 89

[94] Surat Al-Ana'm: 155

[95] Surat Al-Hijr: 9

not a single word of this Qur'an has been changed, although the disbelievers tried their utmost to change it with each and every way, but they failed miserably in their efforts.

It has been pointed out that the message of the Qur'an is for all mankind. It guides to that which is most right. Allah sent down this Noble Book to make manifest everything, which He considers to be for the good of mankind in this world as well as in the Hereafter. In this respect He said:

'Verily, this Qur'an guides to that which is most just and right'.[96]

The Qur'an was sent down as a healing for those who have a disease in their hearts and a mercy for those who believe. This is indicated in Allah's words:

'O mankind! There has come to you a good advice from your Lord (i.e. the Qur'an, ordering all that is good and forbidding all that is evil), and a healing for that (disease of ignorance, doubt, hypocrisy and differences, etc.) in your breasts, - a guidance and a mercy (explaining lawful and unlawful things, etc.) for the believers'.[97]

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[96] Surat Al-Isra: 9

[97] Surat Yunus: 57

It shows a hope for spiritual future and joy in the forgiveness of sins for those who follow its rules and regulations. Whereas those who rebel against its laws are spiritually dead and will suffer loss in this world and in the Hereafter. This is signified in the words of Allah:

'And We send down from the Qur'an that which is a healing and a mercy to those who believe (in Islamic Monotheism and act on it), and it increases the Zâlimûn (polytheists and wrong-doers) nothing but loss'.[98]

All mankind have been warned against refusing to see, hear and practice the Signs of Allah, which have been revealed in the Qur'an. Whosoever rejects or turns away form the Message set in the Qur'an, he will then recompense without any doubt the consequences. He will not see Allah's favours, and will be excluded from His Grace. This is indicated in the words of Allah:

'But whosoever turns away from My Reminder (i.e. neither believes in this Qur'an nor acts on its orders, etc.) verily, for him is a life of hardship, and We shall raise him up blind on the Day of Resurrection'.[99]

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98 Surat Al-Isra: 82

99 Surat Taha: 124

Consequently, Those who have Faith should corroborate its truth and certainty with full heart and mind, read it frequently, act upon its laws and regulations with thorough care and strictly avoid its misconception or misinterpretation.

1.4. Belief in Allah's Prophets and Messengers

Allah chose from His creation Prophets and Messengers to invite mankind to the path of Allah. Each Muslim must believe in Allah's Prophets and Messengers: the first of them was Adam (AS) and the last of them and their seal was Muhammad (SAW) . All Messengers are created human beings but Allah blessed them with the message and described them as slaves. Allah said about Noah:

'And I do not say to you that with me are the Treasures of Allah, "Nor that I know the Ghaib (unseen); nor do I say I am an angel'.[100]

All of them are human beings honoured by Allah with the Divine assignment. Allah directed our Prophet Muhammad (SAW) who is the last (end) of Messengers to say:

'Say (O Muhammad (SAW)) I do not tell you that with me are the Treasures of Allah, nor

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[100] Surat Hud: 31

that I know the unseen; nor I tell you that I am an angel. I but follow what is revealed to me by inspiration'.[101]

They are the most perfect in Faith, most God-fearing and most knowledgeable among men of Faith. In this context the Qur'an illustrates:

'It is not in my power to cause you harm, or to bring you to the Right Path' (21). 'Say (O Muhammad (SAW)): None can protect me from Allah's punishment (if I were to disobey Him), nor should I find refuge except in Him'.[102]

Allah had been sending Prophets and Messengers to mankind in order to invite them to the worship of Him Alone, to order them not to ascribe partners unto Him and bring them out of the darkness of polytheism into the light of Monotheism. All the Prophets preached to people to believe in the Oneness of Allah, the Glorious the Everlasting. The following Ayat from the Noble Qur'an illustrates this point:

'And verily, We have sent among every Ummah (community, nation) a Messenger (proclaiming): Worship Allah (Alone) and

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[101] Surat Al-Anaam: 50

[102] Surat Al-Jinn: 21-21

avoid (or keep away from) Taghut (all false deities etc. i.e. do not worship Taghuts besides Allah)'.103

Every Prophet was sent unto his own nation for their guidance, bringing glad tidings and warnings, so that they might have no argument against Allah, but the Message of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) was for all mankind and Jinns. Allah said:

'Say (O Muhammad (SAW): SAW): O mankind! Verily, I am sent to you all as the Messenger of Allah'.104

We believe that the first among the Messengers is Noah and the last is Muhammad (SAW). This is indicated in Allah's words:

'Verily, We have inspired you (O Muhammad (SAW)) as We inspired Noah and the Prophets after him'.105

Allah the Most High also said:

'Muhammad (SAW) is not the father of any man among you, but he is the Messenger of Allah and the Last (end) of the Prophets, And

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103 Surat An-Nahl: 36

104 Surat Al-Araf: 158

105 Surat An-Nisa: 163

Allah is Ever All-Aware of everything'.[106]

Muhammad (SAW) is the last (i.e. the end) of all the Prophets. This is signified in the Hadeeth narrated by Abu Hurairah (RA), Allah's Messenger (SAW) said:

"My similitude in comparison with the other Prophets before me, is that of a man who has built a house nicely and beautifully, except for a place of one brick in a corner. The people go round about it and wonder at its beauty, but say: 'Would that this brick be put in its place!' So I am that brick, and I am the last (end) of the Prophets.".[107]

We believe that there is no Prophet after Muhammad (SAW) . Whoever claims Prophethood after him, or believes in anyone claiming it, is a disbeliever because he is rejecting Allah's words, His Messenger, and the Muslim consensus.

There are many Prophets and Messengers of Allah, about 25 (twenty-five) of them are mentioned in the Qur'an, out of 25, five are mentioned by Allah to have the strongest will. It is not for us to make any difference between one and another of Allah's Messengers. We must honour them all equally, though we know that Allah in

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106 Surat Al-Ahzab: 40

107 Al-Bukhari

His wisdom gave them different gifts, and different degrees of rank. This is revealed in Allah's words:

'Those Messengers! We preferred some to others; to some of them Allah spoke (directly); others He raised to degrees (of honour)'[108]

We believe that there are five Messengers of firm resolution, first among them is Muhammad (SAW), then Noah, Abraham, Moses, and Jesus-son of Mary. It is they who are meant by the following Ayat:

'And (remember) when We took from the Prophets their covenant, and from you (Muhammad (SAW)), and from Noah, Abraham, Moses, and Jesus-son of Mary. We took from them a strong covenant'.[109]

We believe that the message of the Prophet (SAW) includes all the merit of the messages of those dignified Messengers and Allah concluded all messages with the message of Muhammad (SAW) to all mankind because Allah said:

'He (Allah) has ordained for you the same

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[108] Surat Al-Baqarah: 253

[109] Surat Al-Ahzab: 7

religion (Islam) which He ordained for Noah, and that which We have inspired in you O Muhammad (SAW), and that which We ordained for Abraham, Moses and Jesus saying you should establish this religion and be united in it'.[110]

So the aim of sending these Prophets and Messengers to men and Jinns was only that they should worship Allah Alone, as Allah said:

'And I (Allah) created not the Jinns and men except they should worship Me (Alone)'.[111]

Worshiping Allah means: to obey Him and to do all that He has ordained, and to fear Him by abstaining from all that He has forbidden. Then those who obey Allah will be rewarded in Paradise, and those who disobey Him will be punished in the Hell-Fire.

Loving and respecting the Prophets and Messengers and praising them in what they deserve is a duty because they are Allah's choice among His people and they are all paternal brothers. Abu Hurairah (RA) said: I heard Allah's Messenger (SAW) saying:

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[110] Surat Ash-Shura: 13

[111] Surat Athriat: 56

"I am the nearest of all the people to the son of Mary, and all the Prophets are paternal brothers, and there has been no Prophets between me and him (i.e. Jesus)".[112]

We believe that they worshipped Allah according to the best of their ability, conveyed His message to mankind, gave sincere advice to them and bore patiently whatever hurt they received. Rejection of any of Allah's Prophets and Messengers or defaming their characters nullifies Iman (Faith). To disparage the Messengers of Allah or their truthfulness, or their faithfulness in discharge of what they were entrusted with also nullifies Iman. We seek the help of Allah, and ask Him to bless and praise our Prophet Muhammad (SAW), his household and companions.

1.5. Belief in Alyaumul-Akhir (The Last Day/The Hereafter)

Each and every Muslim is obliged to believe with certainty in Alyaumul-Akhir, when people will be restored alive to remain in the abode of enjoyment or in the abode of severe punishment. To believe in Alyaumul-Akhir is fundamental and is part of believing in Al-Ghaib (unseen thing, e.g. Belief in Allah, Angels, Resurrection, etc.). It is also considered one of the primary branches of Iman. All Prophets and Messengers called their

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[112] Al-Bukhari

people to worship Allah Alone and to believe in the Hereafter. They laid so much emphasis on the belief in life after death that even a slight doubt in it meant denying God and made all other beliefs mean-ingless.

Having the assurance of Alyaumul-Akhir is one of the characteristics of Al-Mutataqun: the pious and righteous persons who fear Allah much (abstain from all kinds of sins and evil deeds, which He has forbidden) and love Allah much (perform all kinds of good deeds, which He has ordained). This is signified by the words of Allah:

'And who believe in which has been sent down (revealed) to you (Muhammad (SAW)) and in [the Taurât (Torah) and the Injeel (Gospel), etc.] which were sent down before you and they believe with certainty in the Hereafter'.[113]

We believe that all things were created by Allah; are maintained by Him and will go back to Him and to Him Alone. This is signified in Allah's words:

'So Glorified is He and Exalted above all that they associate with Him, and in Whose Hands is the dominion of all things, and to

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113 Surat Al-Baqarah: 4

Him you shall be returned'.[114]

The above Ayat illustrates the core principal of our Faith. It explains the meaning of Alyaumul-Akhir and shows that in Allah's Hands is the dominance and control of all things, which wait on His Will or Plan.

Alyaumul-Akhir is the day of sorting out. Good and evil will finally be separated, unlike the apparently mysterious conditions in the present temporary life, when they seem to be mixed together. As Allah in addressing the disbelievers said:

'(It will be said): "This is the Day of Judgement, which you used to deny".[115]

On that day, everyone will be finally judged fairly in accordance with the life that he/she has lived. There will be personal responsibility: neither husband nor wife or anyone else can lay the blame on the other. Obviously, no one can stand and intercede except with Allah's permission. The responsibility is personal and cannot be shifted onto others. Every one will be judged according to his own deeds. In this context Allah said:

'And fear a Day (of Judgement) when a

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[114] Surat Yasin: 83

[115] Surat As-Saffat: 21

person shall not avail another, nor will intercession be accepted from him nor will compensation be taken from him nor will they be helped'.[116]

Each person will stand alone, unable to deny what he or she has done, and the inclusive power on that Day will be in the Hands of Allah. This is signified in Allah's words:

'Again, what will make you know what the Day of Recompense is? It will be the Day when no person shall have power (to do) anything for another, and the Decision, that Day, will be (wholly) with Allah'.[117]

On that Day, personal responsibility will be fully enforced. The final judgement will be absolutely to Allah. It has been reported on the authority of Abu Barza (RA), he heard the Messenger of Allah (SAW) saying:

"A slave of Allah will remain standing on the Day of Judgement till he is questioned about his age and how he spent it; and about his knowledge and how he utilised it and about his wealth, how he acquired it and in what way he spent it, and about his body and how he wore it

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[116] Surat Al- Baqarah: 48

[117] Surat Al-Infitar: 18-19

out".[118]

Strong Faith can only save us from the fall. If we have no Faith in the Last Day, or the certainty of Allah's rules and regulations, then we have to blame ourselves and shall indeed have to taste the punishment for our sins. Allah's decree of justice requires that every soul should taste the consequences of its own sins, and that decree must be fulfilled. In the Hereafter, no excuse can serve. It is only Allah's mercy that can save. Therefore, we have to fear Allah and to look to what provision we have sent for that 'Day' which may be described as 'the morrow' in relation to the present life, which is today. In this context Allah said:

'O you who believe! Fear Allah and keep your duty to Him. And let every person look to what he has sent forth for the morrow, and fear Allah. Verily, Allah is All-Aware of what you do'.[119]

Everything points to Allah, the One True Eternal God. In so far as people do not believe this, the fault is in their will; they do not wish to believe, and the motive behind it is pride, the sin that brought about the downfall of Iblis (Allah's Curse be upon him). Allah said:

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[118] At-Tirmidhi

[119] Surat Al-Hashr: 18

'Your Ilâh (God) is One Ilâh (God Allah, none has the right to be worshipped but He). But for those who believe not in the Hereafter, their hearts deny (the faith in the Oneness of Allah), and they are proud'.[120]

Denying Alyaumul-Akhir is considered disbelief and astray. This is signified in Allah's words:

'O you who believe! Believe in Allah, and His Messenger (Muhammad (SAW)), and the Book (the Qur'an) which He has sent down to His Messenger, and the Scripture which He sent down to those before (him), and whosoever disbelieves in Allah, His Angels, His Books, His Messengers, and the Last Day, then indeed he has strayed far away'.[121]

Actually Allah has given man besides perceptual consciousness, rational, aesthetic and moral consciousness too. It is this consciousness that guides man regarding realities that cannot be verified through sensory data. That is why all the Prophets of God (Allah) while calling people to believe in moral and ra-tional cconsciousness of man. For example, when the idolaters of Makkah denied even the possibility of life after death, the Qur'an exposed the weakness of their stand by advancing

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[120] Surat An-Nahl: 22

[121] Surat An-Nisa: 136

very logical and rational arguments in support of it:

'And he puts forth for Us a parable, and forgets his own creation. He says: "Who will give life to these bones when they have rotted away and became dust?" 'Say: (O Muhammad (SAW)) "He will give life to them Who created them for the first time! And He is the All-Knower of every creation!" 'He, Who produces for you fire out of the green tree, when behold! You kindle therewith'. 'Is not He, Who created the heavens and the earth Able to create the like of them? Yes, indeed! He is the All-Knowing Supreme Creator'.[122]

In this respect what really should be emphasised is the belief of Alyaumul-Akhir from our hearts and not just lip service. It is an act, a doing of things, which become a preparation and provision for that Day. The gates of goodness can be achieved not only by feelings or an emotion, but striving in the Cause of Allah by preparing ourselves for that Day through performing righteous deeds, for Allah observes both our inner motives and is well-acquainted with what we do. We should not think and pray only of worldly accounts, otherwise we will lose the higher things of the future. All kinds of human reserves and riches are but momentary

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[122] Surat YaSin: 78-81

sources of enjoyment. They should not turn us away from our devotion to Allah; otherwise the loss is our own. This is indicated in Allah's words:

'O you who believe! Let not your properties or your children divert you from the remembrance of Allah. And whosoever does that, then they are the losers'.[123]

We have been told that the proper attitude of a Muslim is neither to renounce this world (i.e. forget the legitimate desires of this life) nor to be so occupied in it (i.e. think too exclusively of wealth, properties, children, etc) as to overlook the Hereafter. The true believers are those who adopt a balanced approach. This is signified in Allah's words:

'But seek, with that (wealth) which Allah has bestowed on you, the home of the Hereafter, and forget not your portion of legal enjoyment in this world, and do good as Allah has been good to you, and seek not mischief in the land. Verily, Allah likes not the Mufsidûn (those who commit great crimes and sins, oppressors, tyrants, mischief-makers, corrupts)'.[124]

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[123] Surat Al-Munafiqun: 9

[124] Surat Al-Qasas: 77

Believing in the Hereafter requires every Muslim to believe in the signs of the Last Day (the Hour). As we have been informed that there are both minor and major signs, some of which are mentioned in the Qur'an and some are clearly described by the Prophet (SAW). Of the minor ones are the outnumbering of men by women to the point that there will be left one man for every fifty women, the construction of high buildings by the Bedouins, the spreading of ignorance and decreasing of religious knowledge by the death of scholars. Narrated Abu Hurairah (RA), Allah's Messenger (SAW) said that of the signs of the Hour are:

"The reduction of time, decrease of religious knowledge, prevalence of miserliness, appearance of afflictions and the increase of bloodshed".[125]

One of the minor signs of the Last Day will also be a fight between the Muslims and the Jews. Narrated Abu Hurairah (RA), Allah's Messenger (SAW) said:

"The Last Hour would not come till the Muslims fight against the Jews, and the Muslims will kill them until the Jews hide themselves behind the stones and trees; and the stones and trees would speak up saying: 'O Muslim! O slave of Allah! There is a Jew hiding behind me; come and

[125] Ibnu Majah

kill him".[126]

Of the major signs of the Last Day are the appearance of Ad-Dajal (Anti Christ) who was described by the Prophet (SAW) as a young man with twisted curly hair and with a blind eye.127 The appearance of Ya'juj and Ma'juj (Gog and Magog) who have been mentioned in the Qur'an and in the Hadeeth written in Sahih Muslim.127 The name (Gog and Magog) stands for wild people who will break their barriers and swarm from every part of the earth. This is indicated in Allah's words:

'Until, when Ya'jûj and Ma'jûj (Gog and Magog) are let loose (from their barrier), and they swiftly swarm from every mound' [128]

The Beast, which will be brought out from the earth and speak to people, restoring the true values of true and false. Allah said:

'And when the Word (of torment) is fulfilled against them, We shall bring out from the earth a beast to them, which will speak to them because mankind believed not with

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126 Muslim

127 For further notes, see Sahih Muslim, IV: 1517-1518

128 Surat Al-Anbiya: 96

certainty in Our Ayât'.[129]

The appearance of Al-Mahdi who will be from the Muslim nation and whose name is the same as the name of the Prophet (SAW). The eruption of a fire in Aden and the rising of the sun from the west, which are recorded in Sahih Muslim. The descending of Issa (Jesus: AS). Narrated Abu Hurairah (RA), Allah's Messenger (SAW) said:

"By Him in Whose Hand my soul is, surely Issa (Jesus) the son of Maryam (Mary) will soon second amongst you as a just ruler, he will break the cross, kill the swine and waive the Jizyah (Taxe)".[130]

We constantly pray to Allah saying: Our Lord! Give us good in this world, and good in the Hereafter, and save us from the punishment of the Fire.

1.6. Belief in Al Qada' Wal Al-Qadar (Preordainment and Fatalism)

Al Qada' Wal Al-Qadar (Preordainment and Fatalism) means that whatever Allah has ordained must come to pass good or evil. Allah decreed all-matters before its existence, and Allah knows exactly when, how and where everything will

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[129] Surat An-Naml: 82

[130] Al-Bukhari

occur, and everything occurs according to His Decree. Allah's creation is not haphazard. Everything hidden and apparent goes by His Law. The fact that belief in Al-Qadar is a part of Iman has been indicated in Allah's words and the Hadeeth of the Prophet (SAW). The proof of Al-Qadar has been stated in Allah's words:

'Verily, We have created all things with Qadar (Divine Preordainments of all things before their creation, as written in the Book of Decrees Al-Lauh Al-Mahfûz)'.[131]

Nothing can happen but according to His Plan. Everything has its appointed time, place and occasion. This is no mere chance: Allah regulates all things in just measure. Every single thing is before His sight, in due proportion. Nothing occurs or takes shape within the earth and the heavens but with Allah's knowledge and by His order. Allah said:

'Allah knows what every female bears, and by how much the wombs fall short (of their time or number) or exceed. Everything with Him is in (due) proportion'.[132]

Allah's command is but a single act and in His

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131 Surat Al-Qamar: 49

132 Surat Ar-Ra'd: 8

command the word Kun (Be) and it is without the intervention of any other being. The moment He wills a thing, it becomes His Word. This is indicated in Allah's words:

'Verily, His Command, when He intends a thing, is only that He says to it, "Be!" and it is!'. 'So Glorified is He and Exalted above all that they associate with Him, and in Whose Hands is the dominion of all things, and to Him you shall be returned'.[133]

Allah's resolution of the nature of things was established before He created the heavens and earth. External disasters or misfortunes occur according to Allah's Will and Plan. Even where mankind practise their own will, the effects that follow are in concurrence with the Plan decreed by Allah. Allah's Creation is not haphazard. Everything goes by Divine law, proportion and measure. Everything has its appointed time, place and definite limitation. Nothing happens but according to Allah's Plan. This is signified in the words of Allah:

'And fear Allah, and know that Allah is All-Aware of everything'.[134]

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[133] Surat Ya Sin: 82-83

[134] Surat Al-Baqarah: 231

Each Muslim should depend on Allah when doing any action because both the cause and effect are the result of Allah's Decree. Every matter of Preordainment (e.g. deaths, births, provisions, the Hour, etc.) is decreed by Allah. This is indicated in the words of Allah:

'It is Allah Who has created seven heavens and of the earth the like thereof (i.e. seven). His Command descends between them (heavens and earth), that you may know that Allah has power over all things, and that Allah surrounds (comprehends) all things in (His) Knowledge'.[135]

The keys of the unseen are known only by Him and in His Command. Allah said:

'Verily, Allah! With Him (Alone) is the knowledge of the Hour, He sends down the rain, and knows that which is in the wombs. No person knows what he will earn tomorrow, and no person knows in what land he will die. Verily, Allah is All-Knower, All-Aware (of things)'.[136]

We believe whatever goal we achieve is from Allah and that what He decreed. We have to work hard

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[135] Surat At-Talaq: 12

[136] Surat Luqman: 34

but in case of failure we should not despair or complain because that is by Allah's decree Who possesses the heavens and the earth. In this respect Allah said:

'Know you not that Allah knows all that is in heaven and on earth? Verily, it is (all) in the Book (Al-Lauh Al-Mahfûz). Verily! That is easy for Allah'.[137]

Since that is going to happen anyway, the individual should be patient and hope for the reward from Allah. All external disasters or misfortunes, which may strike mankind, happen according to the Plan of Allah. All existence waits on His Will. The consequences that follow are also in accordance with the laws and Plan decreed by Allah beforehand. Allah said:

'No calamity befalls on the earth or in yourselves but is inscribed in the Book of Decrees (Al-Lauh Al-Mahfûz), before We bring it into existence. Verily, that is easy for Allah'.[138]

Thus we have to believe from the heart in Divine Preordainment, whether good or bad, which Allah has measured and ordained for all creatures according to His previous knowledge and as

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[137] Surat Al-Hajj: 70

[138] Surat Al-Hadid: 22

deemed suitable by His wisdom. So, all that people perform of saying, deeds, or omissions are known to Allah and He has recorded them, willed them and created them. Allah said:

'If Allah had willed, they would not have fought against one another, but Allah does what He likes'.[139]

And Allah also said:

'While Allah has created you and what you make'.[140]

Belief in Divine Preordainment gives a person firmness in Faith, guides his heart and compensates him for whatever he loses. When a person believes that Allah knows previously what His slaves will do and that misfortunes are going to take place, then his soul will be at ease and his heart will be satisfied with Allah's Decree. He will have no fear of death, and no fear of harm from human beings. Belief in Divine Preordainment leads to the expiation of sins. The Prophet (SAW) said that:

"A believer is not beset by any hardship or fatigue or illness or grief or even a worry except that Allah will

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[139] Surat Al-Baqarah: 253

[140] Surat As-Saffat: 96

expiate thereby his sins".[141]

Furthermore if a person is satisfied with whatever Allah has appointed for him and he is patient when afflicted with calamity then he is promised glad tidings from Allah. It is the blessings of their Lord and His Mercy. Allah said:

'But give glad tidings to As-Sabirun (the patient). Who, when afflicted with calamity, say: "Truly! To Allah we belong and truly, to Him we shall return.".They are those on whom are the Salawât (i.e. blessings, etc.) (i.e. who are blessed and will be forgiven) from their Lord, and (they are those who) receive His Mercy, and it is they who are the guided-ones'.[142]

Denying Al Qadar (Divine Preordainment) nullifies Iman (Faith). However, a person should not use al Qadar as an excuse to commit sins because no one knows his Fate except Allah. This is signified in Allah's words:

'Say: "None in the heavens and the earth knows the Ghaib (unseen) except Allah, nor can they perceive when they shall be

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[141] Al-Bukhari

[142] Surat Al-Baqarah: 155-157

resurrected'.[143]

Although we believe that all that is good and bad exists by Allah's Decree, Knowledge and Will every person's action of good and evil, happen by his own choice and he alone bears the full responsibility for his actions. Allah sent His Prophets and revealed to them His Books to make clear the path of happiness and of misery. He clarifies in the Holy Qur'an all types of good deeds and all types of unlawful actions and things. Furthermore the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) showed what is lawful and what is unlawful and warned all mankind of being disobedient to Allah. He made known to all mankind the difference between guidance and error. So if a person abandons prayers or drinks wine, he deserves the penalty for his transgression against Allah's prohibition and commands unless he repents and regrets it.

1.7. Belief in Resurrection

Each Muslim should believe in Resurrection wherein Allah brings to life all the dead. The fact that believing in Resurrection is a part of Iman has been supported by evidence from the Qur'an and the Hadeeth of the Prophet (SAW). Allah said:

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143 Surat An-Naml: 65

'Thereof (the earth) We created you, and into it We shall return you, and from it We shall bring you out once again'.[144]

Allah Himself swears by the Resurrection Day as a confirmation that it will take place. Allah said:

'I swear by the Day of Resurrection'[145]

It has been mentioned that the angel 'Israfil' blows the Horn: with the first trumpet of the Resurrection, all that are in the heavens and the earth will lose consciousness. The entire uniAyat will change; the earth will be altered to a different earth and so will be the heavens. With the second one, mankind will be resurrected. They will stand in a new world before the Lord of the Worlds; and judgment will commence. This is indicated in Allah's words:

'And the Trumpet will be blown, and all who are in the heavens and all who are on the earth will swoon away, except him whom Allah will. Then it will be blown a second time and behold, they will be standing, looking on (waiting)'.[146]

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144 Surat Taha: 55

145 Surat Al-Qiyamah: 1

146 Surat Az-Zumar: 68

The earth will be commanded by Allah to reveal all evidence of man's life on it. It will come forth as a witness to testify about the deeds done therein, and about the sins committed against Allah. This is indicated in Allah's words:

'That Day it will declare its information (about all that happened over it of good or evil). 4 Because your Lord has inspired it'.[147]

On that Day people will be surprised and overwhelmed so that they feel surrounded by a catastrophe, which they cannot escape. This is signified in Allah's words:

'Has there come to you the narration of the overwhelming (i.e. the Day of Resurrection)'.[148]

Abu Hurairah (RA) narrated that the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) said:

"I will be the first to raise my head after the second blowing of the Trumpet and will see Moses holding or clinging to the Throne, and I will not know whether he had been in that state all the time or after the blowing of the trumpet".[149]

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147 Surat Az-Zalzalah: 4-5

148 Surat Al-Ghashiyah: 1

149 Al-Bukhari

We believe that people will stand up from their graves, answering the call of the Lord of the UniAyat. They are going to be bare-footed, naked, etc. This is signified in Allah's words:

'And (remember) the Day when we shall roll up the heavens like a scroll rolled up for books, as we began the first creation, We shall repeat it, (it is) a promise binding upon Us. Truly, we shall do it'.[150]

It has been narrated on the authority of Abu Hurairah (RA), the Messenger of Allah (SAW) said:

"The people will perspire on the Day of Resurrection and their perspiration will come up to seventy cubits in the earth and it will reach up to them till it will touch their ears".[151]

Man should have no doubt about the Resurrection as Allah said:

'O mankind! If you are in doubt about the Resurrection, then verily! We have created you (i.e. Adam) from dust, then from a Nutfah (Mixed drops of male and female sexual discharge), then from a clot (a piece of thick coagulated blood) then from a little lump of

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150 Surat Al-Anbiya: 105

151 Al-Bukhari and Muslim

flesh, some formed and some unformed (miscarriage)'.[152]

We as Muslims believe that every body will die and on the Resurrection Day, he will be raised up to life again. Allah also said:

'After that, surely, you will die. Then (again) surely, you will be resurrected on the day of Judgement'.[153]

Allah also said:

'And they say: "When we are bones and fragments (destroyed), should we really be resurrected (to be) a new creation?'. 'Say (O Muhammad (SAW)) "Be you stones or iron". 'Or some created thing that is yet greater (or harder) in your breasts. Then, they will say: "Who shall bring us back (to life)?". Say "He Who created you first!". Then, they will shake their heads at you and say "When will that be?". Say: 'Perhaps it is near'.[154]

We believe that every act has to be accounted for, and evil must have its recompense at the Resurrection. On that Day, the limbs and

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[152] Surat Al-Hajj: 5

[153] Surat Al-Mu'minun: 15-16

[154] Surat Al-Isra: 49-51

faculties (e.g. tongues, hands, feet, skins, etc) of the enemies of Allah will bear witness against them as to their actions. This is indicated in Allah's words:

'On the Day when their tongues, their hands, and their legs or feet will bear witness against them as to what they used to do'. [155]

On that Day Allah - the very essence of Truth and Reality will give tongues to hands, feet, skins, etc. They will contribute to the exposition of facts and justice. In this context Allah also said:

'And they will say to their skins, "Why do you testify against us?" They will say: "Allah has caused us to speak, as He causes all things to speak, and He created you the first time, and to Him you are made to return'.[156]

The disbelievers think that there is no future life and no responsibility of their actions beyond what they see in the present life. If that were true, wickedness will remain unpunished and all the pain suffered by righteous people, if they find no compensation in this life, will not be recompensed. Therefore, anyone denies resurrection is a disbeliever. Disbelieving in Resurrection would be

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[155] Surat An-Nur: 24

[156] Surat Fussilat: 21

a strange result in a world of justice. We have been informed by Allah that there will be a Resurrection and on that day we shall be told of what we did, and our moral and spiritual responsibility will be totally exposed. Allah said:

'The disbelievers pretend that they will never be resurrected (for the Account). Say (O Muhammad (SAW)): "Yes! By my Lord, you will certainly be resurrected, then you will be informed of (and recompensed for) what you did, and that is easy for Allah'.[157]

The Day of Resurrection will be the Day when Allah's attributes of Justice and Mercy will be in full manifestation. Allah will shower His mercy on those who suffered for His sake in this present life, believ-ing that an eternal bliss was awaiting them. But those who abused the bounties of Allah, caring nothing for the life to come, will be in the most miserable state. Drawing a comparison between them, Allah said:

'Is he whom We have promised an excellent promise (Paradise), which he will find true, like him whom We have made to enjoy the luxuries of the life of (this) world, then on the Day of Resurrection, he will be among those brought up (to be punished in the Hell-

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[157] Surat At-Taghabun: 7

fire)?'.[158]

The Qur'an also states that this worldly life is a preparation for the eternal life after death. But those who deny the Day of Resurrection become slaves of their passions and desires and make fun of virtuous and God-conscious people. Such persons realize their folly only at the time of their death and wish in vain to be given a further chance in the world. In this context Allah said:

'And spend (in charity) of that with which We have provided you, before death comes to one of you and he says: "My Lord! If only You would give me respite for a little while (i.e. return to the worldly life), then I should give Sadaqah (i.e. Zakât) of my wealth and be among the righteous'.[159]

Belief in the Day of Resurrection not only guarantees suc-cess in the Hereafter but also makes this world full of peace and happiness by making individuals most responsible and dutiful in their activities. Our Lord! Grant us what You promised unto us through Your Messengers and disgrace us not on the Day of Resurrection, for You never break Your Promise.

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158 Surat Al-Qasas: 61

159 Surat Al-Munafiqun: 10

1.8. Belief in the Day of Account (Records and Scales)

Each Muslim should believe in the Day of Account. People will be held accountable and requited for their deeds after Resurrection. Belief in the Day of Account as a part of Iman (Faith) is confirmed by Allah's words and the Hadeeth of the Prophet (SAW). Allah said:

'And to Allah belongs all that is in the heavens and all that is in the earth, that He may requite those who do evil with that which they have done (i.e. punish them in Hell), and reward those who do good, with what is best (i.e. Paradise)'.[160]

We are told that the Day of Account will last very long period during which mankind will stand before Allah to receive their sentence. This is signified in Allah's words:

'The angels and the Rûh (Gabriel) ascend to Him in a Day the measure whereof is fifty thousand years'.[161]

Allah will judge between humans on matters wherein they used to differ. They will be divided

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[160] Surat An-Najm: 31

[161] Surat Al-Ma'arij: 4

in respect of their faith and their ranks. Allah said:

'Allah will judge between them on the Day of Resurrection about that wherein they have been differing'.[162]

Records of deeds will be given to people in their right hands, in their left hands or behind their backs. This is signified in the words of Allah:

'Then, as for him who will be given his Record in his right hand, He surely will receive an easy reckoning, And will return to his family in joy! But whosoever is given his Record behind his back, He will invoke (his) destruction, and shall enter a blazing Fire, and made to taste its burning'.[163]

The Mizan (the scale which will be set up on the Day of Account for weighing the deeds of people) is described in Allah's words:

'And We shall set up balances of justice on the Day of Resurrection, then none will be dealt with unjustly in anything. And if there be the weight of a mustard seed, We will bring it. And Sufficient are We to take

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[162] Surat Al-Baqarah: 113

[163] Surat Al-Inshiqaq: 7-13

account'.[164]

We believe that scales of deeds will be set up on the Day of Account and no soul shall be wronged. Allah said:

'Then, those whose scales (of good deeds) are heavy, - these, they are the successful, and those whose scales (of good deeds) are light, - they are those who lose their ownselves, in Hell will they abide'.[165]

To believe in the Day of Account is not merely a feeling or an emotion; it is an act, doing of deeds of righteousness, which become a preparation of that day. This belief, which is a part of Faith, implies self-restrain, guarding us from all sins, and the positive doing of good deeds. Examples of these good deeds that we are encouraged to perform have been mentioned in the following Hadeeth. Narrated Abu Hurairah (RA), Allah's Messenger (SAW) said:

"When a person is dead, his deeds cease (are stopped) except three (1) Deeds of continuous charity, (2) Written knowledge with which mankind getsbenefit, (3) A righteous pious son or daughter who begs Allah to forgive his/her

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[164] Surat Al-Anbiya: 47

[165] Surat Al-Mu'minun: 102-103

parents".[166]

We believe in all that is mentioned in the Qur'an and the Prophet's saying regarding the Day of Account and its horrors, may Allah save us from them. The Sirat will be set up over the Hell and people will pass over it according to their deeds. The Prophet (SAW) will be standing on the Path, saying, 'Lord, Save! Save!'. At both sides of the Path there are hooks that are designed to take whom Allah wills: some are saved but bruised; others are thrown into Hell. (Al-Bukhari and Muslim). Narrated Abu Sa'id Al-Khudri (RA), Allah Messenger (SAW) said:

"The believers, after being saved from the Hell-Fire, will be stopped at a bridge between Paradise and Hell and mutual relation will take place among them regarding the wrongs they have committed in the world against one another. After they are cleansed and purified (through the relation), they will be admitted into Paradise; and by Him in Whose Hand Muhammad (SAW)'s soul is, everyone of them will know his dwelling in Paradise better than he knew his dwelling in this world".[167]

It is not what people say about themselves, or what others say of them, that resolves judgement about them. It is what they did and what they put

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[166] Muslim

[167] Al-Bukhari

forward for that Day. All that they thought to conceal will be clear on that Day before Allah's judgement.

'On that Day man will be informed of what he sent forward (of his evil or good deeds), and what he left behind (of his good or evil traditions'.[168]

The denial of Day of Account has its consequences not only in the Hereafter but also in this world. When a nation as a whole denies it, all kinds of evils and corruptions become uncontrolled in that society and ultimately it is destroyed. The Qur'an mentions the terrible end of 'Aad, Thamud and the Pharaoh in some detail. Actually if a man denies the Day of Account, the very belief in Allah becomes irrele-vant or even if one believes in Allah, that would be an unjust and indifferent God: having once created man not concerned with his fate. The Qur'an very emphatically states that the Day of Account must come and Allah will decide about the fate of each soul according to his/her record of deeds. The Qur'an very clearly says that the disbelievers have no sound basis for their denial of the Day of Account. It is based on pure conjectures:

'And they say: "There is nothing but our life

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[168] Surat Al-Qiyamah: 13

of this world, we die and we live and nothing destroys us except Ad-Dahr (the time). And they have no knowledge of it, they only conjecture'.[169]

Surely Allah will raise all the dead. But He has His own plan of things. A day will come when the whole universe will be destroyed and then again the dead will be resurrected to stand before Allah. That Day will be the beginning of the life that will never end, and that Day every person will be rewarded by Allah ac-cording to his or her good or evil deed.

O Allah! Make religion easy for us by virtue of which our affairs are protected, set right for us our world where our lives exist, make good for us our Hereafter which is our resort to which we have to return.

1.9. Belief in Al-Jinn

The subject of Al-Jinn has been mentioned in both the Holy Qur'an and in the Hadeeth of the Prophet (SAW). Both the Qur'an and the Hadeeth describe the Jinn as a definite kind of living beings. They can change their shape and appear in various forms. In this respect each and every Muslim must believe in the existence of Al-Jinn.

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[169] Surat Al-Jathiya: 24

Abu Sa'id Al-Khuduri (RA) reported that the Prophet (SAW) said:

"Indeed you will find some inhabitants within your household, so whenever you come across any of these warn them three times, if they return it is alright otherwise you may kill them".[170]

The Jinns are created from a flame of fire, whereas human beings are created from clay. Allah also said:

'And the jinn, We created a foretime from the smokeless flame of fire'.[171]

We believe that they are entrusted with certain responsibilities. This is indicated in the words of Allah:

'And I (Allah) created not the Jinns and humans except they should worship Me (Alone)'.[172]

We are told that the Jinns like human beings have been instructed by messengers from amongst themselves to follow the commands of Allah. This is indicated in Allah's words:

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[170] Muslim

[171] Surat Al-Hijr: 27

[172] Surat Adh-Dhariat: 56

'O you assembly of Jinns and mankind! Did not there come to you Messengers from amongst you, reciting unto you My Ayats and warning you of the meeting of this Day of yours?' They will say: "We bear witness against ourselves".[173]

Among the Jinns some are righteous and some the contrary. This is indicated in the words of Allah:

'There are among us some that are righteous, and some the contrary; we are groups each having a different way (religious sect, etc.)'.[174]

Upon the sanctity and devotion of the Prophet (SAW), many Jinns accepted the mission and the message of Unity. A company of them heard the Qur'an recited by the Prophet and they believed therein. They, therefore, renounced paganism and also the principle of a son begotten by Allah. This is signified in the words of Allah:

'Say (O Muhammad (SAW)): "It has been revealed to me that a group (from three to ten in number) of Jinns listened (to this Qur'an). They said: 'Verily! We have heard a wonderful Recital (this Qur'an)! 'It guides to the Right Path, and we have believed therein, and we

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[173] Surat Al-Ana'm: 130

[174] Surat Al-Jinn: 11

shall never join (in worship) anything with our Lord (Allah)'.[175]

Although the Jinns are invisible to us, they are personalised beings who enjoy a certain amount of free will and thus will be called to account. Those who are pious will be rewarded for their goodness and those who are wicked will receive chastisement for their evilness. This is signified in the words of Allah:

'And of us(Al-Jinn) some are Muslims (who have submitted to Allah, after listening to this Qur'an), and of us some are Al-Qâsitûn (disbelievers those who have deviated from the Right Path)'. And whosoever has embraced Islam (i.e. has become a Muslim by submitting to Allah), then such have sought the Right Path." And as for the Qâsitûn (disbelievers who deviated from the Right Path), they shall be firewood for Hell'.[176]

It has been mentioned that one of the Jinns is Iblis (The Shaytan: Satan/Devil) (Allah's Curse be upon him). This is signified in Allah's words:

'And (remember) when We said to the angels; "Prostrate to Adam." So they prostrated

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[175] Surat Al-Jinn:1-2

[176] Surat Al-Jinn: 14-15

except Iblîs (Satan). He was one of the Jinns; he disobeyed the Command of his Lord'.[177]

Allah has informed us in a number of Ayats that the Shaytan (Satan) is our enemy and should be treated as such. He Subhanahu Wa-Ta'ala said:

'Surely, Shaitân (Satan) is an enemy to you, so take (treat) him as an enemy. He only invites his Hizb (followers), they may become the dwellers of the blazing Fire'.[178]

We have been told his history throughout the Qur'an and the Hadeeth of the Prophet (SAW). The Shaytan (Satan) obtained Allah's permission to tempt human beings. He works hard to seduce mankind and corrupt their nature. The Shaytan's deceptions are with false desires, false superstitions and false fears. This is indicated in Allah's words:

'Verily, I will mislead them, and surely, I will arouse in them false desires; and certainly, I will order them to slit the ears of cattle, and indeed I will order them to change the nature created by Allah".[179]

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[177] Surat Al-Kahf: 50

[178] Surat Fatir: 6

[179] Surat An-Nisa: 119

The Shaytan (Satan) deceived our parents (Adam and his wife) who were created by Allah innocent in issues material and spiritual. Although they were warned of the danger of Shaytan, they wronged their own souls and Shaytan brought about their fall. He made them slip from Paradise after he swore to them both, that he was their sincere advisor. This is signified in the words of Allah:

'Then Shaitân (Satan) whispered suggestions to them both in order to uncover that which was hidden from them of their private parts (before).'[180]

He has misled a great number of human beings. It is therefore our duty to disobey the Shaytan and never follow his footsteps. For he always commands us of what is evil and shameful. This is indicated in Allah's words:

'O mankind! Eat of that which is lawful and good on the earth, and follow not the footsteps of Shaitân (Satan). Verily, he is to you an open enemy. [Shaitân (Satan)] commands you only what is evil and Fahshâ (sinful), and that you should say against Allah what you know not'.[181]

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[180] Surat Al-Ara'f: 20

[181] Surat Al-Baqarah: 168-169

The Shaytan and his evil soldiers try hard to tempt us from the path of righteousness. He usually disguises himself to deceive us as our friend. Shall we allow ourselves to fall into his trap? We have been advised by Allah and His Messenger (SAW) of how to protect ourselves from this enemy. All types of conflict, dispute, slander as well as provocation's to such disturbance in the soul caused by the Shaytan, should be resisted with the help of Allah. Allah said:

'And if an evil whisper from Shaitân (Satan) tries to turn you away (O Muhammad (SAW)) (from doing good, etc.), then seek refuge in Allah. Verily, He is the All-Hearer, the All-Knower'.[182]

We have to seek Allah's Refuge against all evils. We have to have faith and put all our trust in Allah Alone. When a thought of evil from Shaytan assaults us we have to remember Allah. He Subhanahu Wa-Ta'ala said:

'Verily, those who are Al-Muttaqûn, when an evil thought comes to them from Shaitân (Satan), they remember (Allah), and (indeed) they then see (aright)'.[183]

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[182] Surat Fussilat: 36

[183] Surat Al-Ara'f: 201

We should be always on our guard against the Shaytan's participation and mischief. We are required to recite the Name of Allah in all affairs, because the Shaytan can appear at every matter. This is indicated in the Hadeeth narrated by Jabir (RA), Allah's Messenger (SAW) said:

"The Shaytan appears at everything done by you; he appears even at one's dinner".[184]

In order to avoid the evil of Shaytan who cannot harm anyone except by Allah's leave, the Prophet (SAW) instructed us of efficient practices to perform. Narrated Jabir (RA), I heard Allah's Messenger (SAW) saying:

"If a person mentions the Name of Allah upon entering his house or eating, the Shaytan says, addressing his followers: 'You will find no where to spend the night and no dinner'. But if he enters without mentioning the Name of Allah, the Shaytan says (to his followers); 'You have found a place to spend the night in, and if he does not mention the Name of Allah at the time of eating, the Shaytan says: 'You have found a place to spend the night in as well as food".[185]

In the above Hadeeth we are instructed to remember Allah before entering our houses and before

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[184] Muslim

[185] Muslim

beginning to eat. For entering the house the remembrance of Allah implies the following Dua recited by the Prophet (SAW): *'O Allah! I ask you for what is good of entrance and what is good for exit. With the Name of Allah do we enter, and with the Name of Allah do we leave, and upon our Lord we have put our trust'*. Similarly we are instructed by the Prophet (SAW) not to eat or drink with the left hand, because the Shaytan eats and drinks with his left hand.

The Jinns can never harm human beings if tackled in the right manner. This is indicated in Allah's words:

'Verily! He has no power over those who believe and put their trust only in their Lord'. 'His power is only over those who obey and follow him (Satan), and those who join partners with Him (Allah)'.[186]

Jabir (RA) reported that Allah's Messenger (SAW) said:
"When one of you sees a bad dream let him blow three times on his left, seek refuge in Allah from the Shaytan three times (i.e. by saying: Audhu Billahi Minash-Shaytair-Rajim) and change the side on which he was lying".[187]

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186 Surat An-Nahl: 99-100

187 Muslim

The significance of trusting Allah and requesting security against the mischief of Shaytan has also been signified in the Hadeeth narrated by Anas (RA), Allah's Messenger (SAW) said:

"Whoever says (upon leaving his house): 'I begin with the Name of Allah; I trust in Allah; There is no altering of conditions but by the Power of Allah', it will be said to him: 'You are guided, defended and protected'. The Shaytan will go far away from him".[188]

Further to the above effective procedures, to drive away the mischief of the Shayateen and of other enemies, the following practices have also been proven to be effective:

1. Recitation of specific sections or Ayats from the Holy Qur'an.[189]

2. Recitation of specific Dua for instance: O Allah! We seek your refuge from the dangers of the Shayateen and from their attending to us. O Allah! We seek your help against them and we seek your refuge against their mischief.

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[188] Abu Dawud, At-Tirmidhi and An-Nasa'i

[189] e.g. Surat Al-Fatiha, the four beginning Ayats from Surat Al-Baqarah, the Ayat of Al-Kursi, the end three Ayats of Surat Al-Baqarah, the ten beginning Ayats of Surat Al-Safat, the two beginning Ayats of Surat Al-Jinn, Al-kafirun, Al-Ikhlas, and Al-Mua'withatayn: Surat Al-Falaq and Surat An-Nas

In all situations and affairs we are commanded to follow the teaching of Allah and the practices of the Prophet (SAW). We must accept whatever has been decided by Allah and His Messenger (SAW) and do the best we can to carry it out. This is indicated in Allah's words:

'It is not for a believer, man or woman, when Allah and His Messenger have decreed a matter that they should have any option in their decision. And whoever disobeys Allah and His Messenger, he has indeed strayed in a plain error'.[190]

We have been instructed not to put our own will in competition with Allah's Will. We must show respect to our Prophet (SAW) in all forms of words, practices and behaviour. Allah said:

'O you who believe! Do not put (yourselves) forward before Allah and His Messenger, and fear Allah. Verily! Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing'. [191]

Muslims in the present-day hardly care for the teachings and practices of Allah's Messenger (SAW) because they think that his practices will bring shame, humiliation and disgrace upon them.

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[190] Surat Al-Ahzab: 36

[191] Surat Al-Hujurat: 1

To make matter worse, some of them insult those who adopt the Prophet's teachings and accuse them of being backward. What a shame, the Muslim community has retreated from the instructions of the Qur'an and the excellent example of their Prophet (SAW). Instead of putting their trust in Allah and following the practices of the Prophet in driving out the Shaytan and evils, they go to the magicians to seek help. Thus forgetting Allah's warnings in which He affirms that magic is false and evil. If mankind think that by resorting to black magic, witchcraft, or soothsayers, or to supernatural surroundings, etc. they can protect themselves from the troubles and hardships of their own lives, they are unfortunately misguided. This would amplify their struggles and increase them in sin and further confusion. Allah said:

'And verily, there were men among mankind who took shelter with the masculine among the Jinns, but they (Jinns) increased them (mankind) in sin and disbelief'.[192]

Correspondingly, an authentic Hadeeth of the Prophet (SAW) indicates that whoever goes to a magician and believes of what he/she says, he disbelieves of whatever has been revealed to Muhammad (SAW) . Narrated Safiyyah daughter of Abu Ubaid on the authority of some of the

[192] Surat Al-Jinn: 6

wives of the of Allah's Messenger (SAW) who said:

" He who goes to a soothsayer asking him/ her about something and affirms his/ her consultation, his prayers will not be accepted for forty days".[193]

The right attitude of the believers when they face any difficulty or a trying situation is to realise that they have no power by themselves, but only that which Allah may give them. Rather than look to anyone or anything else to help us, the most obvious and logical thing to do is to ask help from the Lord of all creation.

Our Lord! We take refuge with You from the prompting of the Jinns the Evil-ones; and we take refuge with You, O Lord! Lest they come up to us.

1.10. Belief in Muhammad (SAW)'s Message (SAW)

Each Muslim must believe in the Qur'an and the Sunnah as the basic source of Islamic Shari'ah (Islamic Laws and Rules). To deny the Message of Muhammad (SAW) nullifies Iman (Faith). What is the Message with which Allah sent him? Allah sent him to preach Monotheism and to warn

[193] Muslim

against polytheism. This is indicated in Allah's Words:

'O you (Muhammad (SAW)) enveloped (in garments)! Arise and warn! And your Lord (Allah) magnify. And your garments purify. And keep away from Ar-Rujz (the idols). And give not a thing in order to have more (or consider not your deeds of Allah's obedience as a favour to Allah). And be patient for the sake of your Lord (i.e. perform your duty to Allah)'[194]

The words **'Arise and warn'** indicate a warning against polytheism and teach Monotheism. 'And your Lord magnify' refer to glorification of Allah and declaring His Oneness. The words 'your garments purify and keep away from idols' signify purification of body and soul from polytheism and denouncing worshippers of idols.

We believe it is obligatory to take the texts of the Qur'an and the Prophetic traditions as fundamental sources of Islamic law. We know for sure that what is revealed in Allah's Book and in the traditions of His Messenger Muhammad (SAW) is the truth. Allah said:

'And this Qur'an is not such as could ever be produced by other than Allah (Lord of the

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[194] Surat Al-Muddathir: 1-7

heavens and the earth), but it is a confirmation of (the revelation) which was before it (i.e. the Torah and the Gospel etc.) and a full explanation of the Book, wherein there is no doubt from the Lord of the Alamin (mankind and Jinns and all that exists'.195

Allah has revealed the Qur'an as Al-Furqan that by which we can judge clearly between right and wrong.

'Blessed be He Who sent down the Furqan (criterion of judgement between right and wrong i.e. this Qur'an) to His slave (Muhammad (SAW)) that he may be a warner to the 'Alamîn (mankind and Jinns)'.[196]

The message it contains basically directs all mankind not only to believe in God (Allah) Alone but also it teaches them how to behave. It is obligatory to have Belief in the Messengership of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) . Abu Hurairah (RA) narrated that Allah's Messenger said:

"By Him (Allah) in Whose Hand Muhammad (SAW)'s soul is, there is none from amongst the Jews and the Christians who hears about me and then dies without believing in the Message with which I have been sent (i.e.

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195 Surat Yunus: 37

196 Surat Al-Furqan: 1

Islam), but he will be from the dwellers of the (Hell) Fire".[197]

We believe that the Shari'ah of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) , is the religion of Islam which Allah has chosen for His slaves and does not accept from anyone any other religion, because Allah said:

'Truly, the religion in the Sight of Allah is Islam'. [198]

And Allah the Most High said:
'This day I have perfected your religion for you, completed My Favour upon you, and have chosen for you Islam as your religion'.[199]

The message of Islam is universal. Allah did not send Muhammad (SAW) to one particular tribe but he sent him to mankind at large, and made obeying his message a duty on both jinn and men. Allah said:

'Say (O Muhammad (SAW)): "O mankind! Verily, I am sent to you all as the Messenger of Allah'. [200]

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[197] Muslim

[198] Surat Al-Imran: 19

[199] Surat Al-Ma'idah: 3

[200] Surat Al-Araf: 158

It is also agreed among true scholars that whoever rejects the universal message of Muhammad (SAW) , is rejecting the message of all messengers. This is supported by the following Ayat:

'Verily, those who disbelieve in Allah and His Messengers and wish to make distinction between Allah and His Messengers (by believing in Allah and disbelieving in His Messengers) saying, "We believe in some but reject others", and wish to adopt a way in between'. They are in truth disbelievers. And We have prepared for the disbelievers a humiliating torment'.[201]

We firmly believe that the Qur'an does not contain any contradictions. This is signified by Allah's words:

'Do they not then consider the Qur'an carefully? Had it been from other than Allah, they would surely have found therein much contradiction'.[202]

Whoever claims that there are contradictions in the Qur'an, the Prophetic traditions or between the two must have wicked intentions or a misguided heart as a result of little knowledge, inadequate

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[201] Surat An-Nisa: 150-151

[202] Surat An-Nisa: 82

understanding or lack of deep thinking. So he/she should repent to Allah and quit his/her sin. Allah said:

'He who obeys the Messenger (Muhammad (SAW)), has indeed obeyed Allah, but he who turns away, then we have not sent you as a watcher over them'.[203]

Narrated Abu Hurairah (RA), Allah's Messenger (SAW) said:

"Whoever obeys me, he obeys Allah, and whoever disobeys me, he disobeys Allah, and whoever obeys the ruler I appoint, he obeys me, and whoever disobeys him, he disobeys me".[204]

Abu Hurairah (RA) also narrated that Allah's Messenger (SAW) said:

"All my followers will enter Paradise except those who refuse. They said 'O Allah's Messenger! Who will refuse?. He said: whoever obeys me will enter Paradise, and whoever disobeys me is the one who refuses (to enter it)".[205]

My Lord! You are my Wali (Protector, Helper, Supporter, Guardian, etc.) in this world and in the

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[203] Surat An-Nisa: 80

[204] Al-Bukhari

[205] Al-Bukhari

Hereafter, cause me to die as a Muslim (the one submitting to Your Will), and join me with the righteous.

1.11. Love of Allah and His Messenger Muhammad (SAW)

Every Muslim must love Allah and His Messenger Muhammad (SAW) (SAW) more than anything else. Love of Allah signifies the sweetness of Iman (Faith). Love of Allah and His Messenger is the foundation stone of Iman. Love of Allah means (a) believing that Allah is the only God who deserves to be worshipped; (b) He is the only Creator upon Whom all creatures depend for their means of survival; (c) Allah, the Exalted, is far removed from every deficiency, and there is none like Him; and (d) devoting sincerely all acts of worship to Him Alone. Love of His Messenger (SAW) means that every Muslim should (i) admire and respect him more than any other human being even if he is the closest of his kin; and (ii) accept his Sunnah and act upon it. The fact that Love of Allah and His Messenger is a part of Faith has been indicated in the Hadeeth narrated by Anas (RA), the Prophet (SAW) said:

"Whoever possesses the following three (qualities) will have the sweetness (delight of Faith): The one to whom Allah and His Messenger (Muhammad (SAW)) become dearer than anything else; to love a slave of Allah only for

Allah's Sake; and to detest returning to infidelity after Allah has saved him from it as he would detest to be thrown into the Hell-Fire".206

Love of Allah and His Messenger should be given preference over anything else, whether it is love of children, wealth, worldly interests, etc. Love of Allah and His Messenger can only be achieved by practising what Allah has said in the Qur'an and following the Sunnah of the Prophet (SAW). Allah said:

'The only saying of the Faithful believers, when they are called to Allah (His words-The Qur'an) and His Messenger (SAW), to judge between them, is that they say: "We hear and we obey". And such are the successful (who will live forever in Paradise)'.207

Thus the best discourse is the Book of Allah and the best example is the example of Muhammad (SAW) . Abu Musa Al-Asha'ri (RA) narrated: The Prophet (SAW) said:

"The example of guidance and knowledge (the Qur'an and the Sunnah) with which Allah has sent me is like abundant rain falling on the earth, some of which was fertile soil that absorbed rain water and brought forth vegetation

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206 Al-Bukhari

207 Surat An-Nur: 51

and grass in abundance. (And) another portion of it was hard and held the rainwater and Allah benefited the people with it and they utilised it for drinking, making their animals drink from it and to irrigate the land for cultivation. (And) a portion of it was barren which could neither hold the water nor bring forth vegetation (then that land gave no benefits). The first is the example of the person who comprehends Allah's Religion (Islam) and gets benefit from the knowledge) which Allah has revealed through me and learns and then teaches it to others. The last example is that of a person who does not care for it and does not take Allah's Guidance revealed through me (He is like that barren land)".[208]

The love of Allah and His Messenger Muhammad (SAW) should be dearer than anything else. Allah said:

'If your fathers, your sons, your brothers, your wives, your kindred; the wealth that you have gained, the commerce in which you fear a decline, and the dwellings in which you delight … are dearer to you than Allah and His Messenger, and striving hard and fighting in His Cause, then wait until Allah brings about His Decision (torment). And Allah guides not the people who are Al-Fasiqun (rebellious, disobedient to Allah)'.[209]

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[208] Al-Bukhari

[209] Surat At-Tauba: 24

Again Anas (RA) narrated that Allah's Messenger (SAW) said:

"By Him in Whose Hands my life is, none of you will have Faith till he loves me more than his father and his children, and all mankind".[210]

It has also been narrated on the authority of Anas (RA), a person came to Allah's Messenger (SAW) and asked him: When would be the Last Hour? Thereupon the Prophet said: *What preparation have you made for the Last Hour?* He replied: The love of Allah and of His Messenger. The Prophet said: *"You are with him whom you love".*[211]

Abdullah ibn Hisham (RA) narrated: We were with the Prophet (SAW) and he was holding the hand of Umar bin Al-Khatab (RA). Umar said to him "O Allah's Messenger! You are dearer to me than everything except my ownself" The Prophet (SAW) said: *"No, by Him in Whose Hand my soul is,* (You will not have complete Faith) *till I am dearer to you than your ownself".* Then Umar said to him. However, now, by Allah, you are dearer to me than my ownself. The Prophet (SAW) said: *"Now O Umar (now you are a believer)".*[212]

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210 Al-Bukhari

211 Al-Bukhari and Muslim

212 Al-Bukhari

In this respect, Allah said:

'And let those who oppose the Messenger's (Muhammad (SAW)) commands (his Sunnah - legal ways, orders, acts of worship, statements, etc.) beware, lest some afflictions (earthquakes, killing, floods, etc.) befall them or a painful torment be inflicted on them'.[213]

Irbad bin Sariya (RA) narrated that: One day the Messenger of Allah (SAW) led the prayer for us. Afterwards he turned his face towards us and delivered us an effective religious talk on account of which eyes shed tears and hearts became softened. We said: O' Messenger of Allah, this is as if it were a parting talk! So, advise us. Then he said:

"I enjoin you to fear Allah, to hear and obey even if your leader is a Negro slave. Because whomsoever among you shall live after me will soon see many differences, you should then hold fast to my examples and the examples of the rightly-guided Caliphs who will come after me. Adhere to it and hold them firm with teeth."[214]

To ridicule the Messenger of Allah (SAW) or his truthfulness or attack his authentic sayings, or reject and make fun of him or to find fault with any of his documented behaviour or to claim

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[213] Surat Al-Furqan: 63

[214] Abu Dawud and At-Tirmidhi

Prophethood after Muhammad (SAW) nullifies Iman (Faith). However, love of the Prophet (SAW) does not mean to think that he is God or he should be worshipped. To describe the Prophet (SAW) with names or attributes which belong to Allah only, such as unlimited knowledge of the unseen, or denial of his role as a Messenger of Allah also nullifies Iman (Faith).

We do not deny the miracles that appeared from Allah's Messenger (SAW), but what we deny is making them partners with Allah. This has caused confusion and misunderstanding in people's mind by making false statements particularly in the West about our Prophet Muhammad (SAW) .

Everyone should know that Muhammad (SAW) is the slave of Allah and he is distinguished from others by receiving Inspiration from Allah in the form of the Qur'an and it was his duty to convey this Message to all human beings. Hence he is called the Messenger of Allah. Another falsehood spread in the West is that the Qur'an was written by the Prophet (SAW), but it should be known that the words of the Qur'an could never be written by any one but they are the Words of Allah revealed to the Prophet. In fact all the teachings in the Qur'an are the same as those taught by all the previous Messengers of Allah. Allah said:

'Say (O Muslims): "we believe in Allah and

that which has been sent down to us and that which has been sent down to Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, and to Al-Asbat (the twelve sons of Jacob), and that which has been given to Moses and Jesus, and that which has been given to the Prophets from their Lord. We make no distinction between any of them, and to Him we have submitted in Islam)".[215]

Love of Allah's Messenger requires from us to supplicate Allah to exalt the mention of the Prophet (SAW). Allah and His angels honour and bless the holy Prophet as the greatest of men. We have been commanded to send blessings on him and salute him with all respect. This is indicated in Allah's words:

'Allah sends His Salah (Graces, Honours, Blessings, Mercy, etc.) on the Prophet (Muhammad (SAW)) and also His angels too (ask Allah to bless and forgive him). O you who believe! Send your Salah on (ask Allah to bless) him (Muhammad (SAW)), and (you should) greet (salute) him with the Islamic way of greeting (salutation i.e. As-Salâmu 'Alaikum)'.[216]

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[215] Surat Al-Baqarah: 136

[216] Surat Al-Ahzab: 56

Ibn Masud (RA) reported: Allah's Messenger (SAW) said:

"The people who will be nearest to me on the Day of Judgement will be those who supplicate Allah more often for me".[217]

We have been told that our supplications reach the Prophet and he answers the salutation offered by a Muslim. Narrated Abu Hurairah (RA), Allah's Messenger (SAW) said:

"Whenever someone greets me, Allah returns the soul to my body (in the grave) and I return his greeting".[218]

O Allah! Exalt the mention of Muhammad (SAW) and the family of Muhammad (SAW) as you exalted the family of Abraham. You are Praised and Glorious. O Allah! Bless Muhammad (SAW) and the family of Muhammad (SAW) as You blessed the family of Abraham. You are Praised and Glorious.

1.12. Love of the rightly guided Sahaba (Caliphs and Companions of the Prophet)

It is known that any Muslim who enjoyed the company of the Prophet (SAW) or saw him, is

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[217] At-Tirmidhi

[218] Abu Dawud

regarded as one of his companions. Each Muslim should believe that the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) had rightly guided companions who carried out his Sunnah in spreading knowledge, calling to Islam and managing the Muslims' affairs. We have to love all of them and pray for them. Allah The Most High said:

'And those who came after them say: 'Our Lord! Forgive us and our brethren who have preceded us in Faith, and put not in our hearts any hatred against those who have believed. Our Lord! You are indeed full of kindness, Most Merciful.'[219]

It is prohibited to curse or accuse any of them at all. Narrated Abu Sa'id Al-Khudri (RA), the Prophet (SAW) said:

"Do not curse my Sahaba (companions) By Him in Whose Hand my soul is, if any one of you spent gold equal to Uhud (mountain) it would not be equal to a Mudd (two thirds of a kilogram) or even a half Mudd spent by one of them".[220]

We believe that the best among them and the most entitled to Khalaphat was Abu Baker as-Siddiq, then Umar Ibn Al-Khatab, then Uthman

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[219] Surat Al-Hashr: 10

[220] Al-Bukhari

Ibn Affan, then Ali Ibn Ibi Talib (RAM).

We believe that the Prophet's companions are the best among the Muslim Ummah, then their followers, and then those who followed them. We also believe that the disputes that took place among the Prophet's companions were the result of sincere interpretations they worked hard to reach. Whoever was right among them would be rewarded twice, and whoever was wrong among them would be rewarded once and his mistake would be forgiven. Thus I feel it is a shame to talk about their disputes. We should purify our hearts from hatred and malice against any of them, because Allah said about them:

'Not equal among you are those who spent and fought before the conquering (of Makkah) with those among you who did so after. Such are higher in degree than those who spent and fought afterwards. But to all Allah has promised the best reward'.[221]

We also believe that a group of this Ummah will always remain victorious on the right path, unharmed by those who let them down or those who oppose them, until the day of judgement. May Allah save us from swearing at the companions of Allah's Messenger (SAW) and to respect

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[221] Surat Al-Hadid: 10

all the pious people.

1.13. Love of the Ansar

The fact that love of the Ansar (the citizens of Al-Madinah who helped and gave aid to the Prophet and his followers: the Muhâjirûn: the Muslim emigrants from Makkah and other places) is a part of faith has been signified by the sayings of the Prophet (SAW). Anas (RA) narrated, the Prophet (SAW) said:

"To love the Ansar is a sign of Faith and to hate the Ansar is a sign of hypocrisy".[222]

It has also been narrated by Al-Bara' bin Azib (RA), I heard the Prophet (SAW) saying:

"None loves the Ansar but a believer, and none hates them but a hypocrite. So Allah will love him who loves them, and He will hate him who hates them".[223]

Thus, every Muslim should love the Ansar who instantly embraced Islam and supported it with their ownselves and wealth. The Prophet (SAW) has praised them and acknowledged their support for Allah and His Messenger. The virtues of Ansar and the Prophet's love towards them is

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[222] Al-Bukhari

[223] Al-Bukhari

explained in the Hadeeth narrated by Abu Hurairah (RA), Allah's Messenger said:

"And but for the migration, I would have been one of the Ansar".[224]

He (SAW) loved the Ansar so much to the extent that he used to pray for them and their children. Narrated Zaid bin Arqam (RA), I heard Allah's Messenger (SAW) saying:

"O Allah! Forgive the Ansar and the children of the Ansar".[225]

The merits of the Ansar and other tribes are also expressed in another Hadeeth narrated by Abu Hurairah (RA), Allah's Messenger said:

"The tribe of Quraish, the Ansar, (the people of the tribe of) Juhainah, Muzainah, Aslam, and Ghifar are my Mawali (helpers, protectors, etc.) and they have no Maula (helper, protector, etc.) except Allah and His Messenger".[226]

It was those people who supported the Prophet (SAW), when he migrated to Madinah. They believed in him, honoured him, and helped him.

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[224] Al-Bukhari

[225] Al-Bukhari

[226] Al-Bukhari

They dedicated themselves to the Book of Allah and followed the Sunnah of the Prophet (SAW) entirely and without reserve. That is why Allah blessed them and promised them Gardens of Eternity. Allah described those true believers who dared and suffered for the Cause of Allah and never retreated or withdrew. The best examples are the Muhajirun and the Ansar (RAm). The Muhajirun are those who forsook their homes in Makkah and migrated to Al-Madinah, the Holy Prophet being among the last to leave the post of danger. The Ansar are the citizens of Al-Madinah who helped and gave protection and aid to the Muhajirun in particular to the Prophet (SAW). Because of their sacrifice and suffering they rejoice in the precious gift of the Good Pleasure of their Lord. Allah said:

'And the first to embrace Islam of the Muhâjirûn and the Ansar and also those who followed them exactly (in Faith). Allah is well-pleased with them as they are well-pleased with Him. He has prepared for them Gardens under which rivers flow (Paradise), to dwell therein forever. That is the supreme success'.[227]

The Ansar were Faithful and loyal supporters of Islam, and proved their Faith by great sacrifice.

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[227] Surat At-Taubah: 100

Their devotion and sincerity were proved beyond doubt by their self-denial. They received the Muhajirin with honour and hospitality into their city. They accepted Islam when it was persecuted in Makkah, and invited the Prophet to join them and become their leader. The Hijrah was possible because of their kindness, helpfulness and their generous hospitality. They entertained the Prophet and all the Muhajirin who came with him. The most extraordinary ties of full brotherhood were established between individual members of the one group and the other to the extent that an Ansari divorced one of his wives and let a Muhajir marry her. Similarly, when the land was divided and the major portion was assigned to the Muhajirin, there was not the least jealousy on the part of the Ansar (RAM). Allah said:

'And those who, before them, had homes (in Al-Madinah) and had adopted the Faith, love those who emigrate to them, and have no jealousy in their breasts for that which they have been given (from the booty of Banî An-Nadîr), and give them (emigrants) preference over themselves, even though they were in need of that. And whosoever is saved from his own covetousness, such are they who will be the successful'.[228]

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[228] Surat Al-Hashr: 9

That is why we have been told to love them and never speak ill about them even if in some incidents they had failed to follow the standard. They were forgiven from Allah and His Messenger (SAW). Allah said:

'Allah has forgiven the Prophet, the Muhajiroon and the Ansar in the time of distress (Tabuk expedition, etc.), after the hearts of a party of them had nearly deviated (from the Right Path), but He accepted their repentance. Certainly, He is unto them full of Kindness, Most Merciful'.[229]

O Allah! We ask you to forgive us and our brothers who have preceded us in Faith, and put not in our hearts any hatred against those who have believed. May Allah be pleased with all of the Ansar and we ask Him to elevate their status in Paradise.

1.14. Belief in the Shafa't (Intercession) of the Prophet (SAW)

Every Muslim should believe in intercession in the Day of Judgement. We believe that Allah will save from Hell some people among the believers without the intercession of any one, but by His grace and mercy. The fact that believing in the

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[229] Surat At-Taubah: 117

intercession is a part of Faith has been indicated in Allah's words and the Hadeeth of the Prophet (SAW). Allah the Most High said:

'Allah La ilaha illa Huwa (none has the right to be worshiped but He), the Ever Living, the One Who sustains and protects all that exists. Neither slumber, nor sleep overtakes Him. To Him belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in earth. Who is he that can intercede with Him except with His Permission?'[230]

This Ayat evidently shows that Allah's intercession is absolute. No one can intercede in the Day of Judgement except with His permission. It has been narrated on the authority of Ibn Umar (RAHM), he had heard the Messenger of Allah (SAW) saying:

"A believer will attain nearness to his Lord on the Day of Judgement and enveloping him in His Mercy. He will make him confess his sins by saying: ***Do you recognise this sin and this sin?*** *He will reply: Lord, I recognise. Then He will say:* ***I concealed it up for you in the world, and I forgive it you today.*** *Then the record of his good deeds will be handed to him".*[231]

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[230] Surat Al-Baqarah: 255

[231] Al-Bukhari and Muslim

It is a part of Faith to believe that Allah in His Will and Plan will grade His slaves and give some of them permission to intercede for a fellow-creature according to the laws and duties laid on them. We believe in the special great intercession of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) , which is exclusively limited to him. Narrated Jabir bin Abdullah (RA), the Prophet (SAW) said:

"I have been given five (things) which were not given to any one else before me:

1. I was made victorious by fright, (Allah frightens my enemies) for a distance of one month's journey.
2. The earth has been made for me a place for praying and a thing to purify (perform Tayammum), therefore anyone of my followers can pray wherever he is, at the time of prayer.
3. The booty has been made lawful to me yet it was not lawful to anyone else before me.
4. I have been given the right of intercession (on the Day of Resurrection).
5. Every Prophet used to be sent to his nation only, but I have been sent to all mankind".[232]

The Prophet will plead with Allah, after His permission, to judge among His servants when they suffer from worries and troubles, which they cannot bear. People will go to Adam, then to Noah, then to Abraham, then to Moses, then to Jesus

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[232] Al-Bukhari

but to no avail. This intercession is granted only to our Prophet Muhammad (SAW) who will intercede for some of the Muslims to be taken out from the Fire.

To the Prophet (SAW) was to be assigned in the Hereafter the highest Post of Honour and the Maqam Mahmud (a station of praise and glory, i.e. the highest degree in Paradise! or the honour of intercession on the Day of Resurrection)'. Allah said:

'And in some parts of the night (also) offer the Salah (prayer) with it (i.e. recite the Qur'an in the prayer), as an additional prayer (Tahajjud optional prayer Nawafil) for you (O Muhammad (SAW)). It may be that your Lord will raise you to Maqaman Mahmuda'.[233]

Narrated Ibn Umar (RAHM): "On the Day of Resurrection the people will fall on their knees and every nation will follow their Prophet and they will say, ' O! so-and-so, Intercede for us with Allah, until the right of the intercession will be given to the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) and that will be the day when Allah will raise him to the Maqam Mahmud".[234]

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[233] Surat Al-Isra: 79

[234] Al-Bukhari

This implies his excellence above all other Prophets. Therefore, after listening to the Adhan (call for the prayer), we are advised to ask Allah to grant Muhammad (SAW) Al-Wasillah (the highest position in Paradise) and Al-Fadillah (degree of honour which is bestowed on him above all creation) and to ask Allah to raise him to Maqam Mahmud, which He has promised.

We also believe that intercession will also be granted to some believers like martyrs and pious people from the nation of Muhammad (SAW) and to the angels as well as the Qur'an, which will intercede for some believers. All of this intercession is granted under the permission and the grace of Allah.

In addition to our belief of the intercession of our Prophet (SAW), every Muslim must believe in the pool of the Prophet (SAW), the water of which is whiter than milk and sweeter than honey. The believers among the Prophet's followers come to take from this pool a drink after which they will never be thirsty.

1.15. Belief in the Jannah (Paradise) and in the Nar (Hell-Fire)

Paradise and Hell-Fire are two everlasting created things that are already in existence. Paradise is the abode of enjoyment, which Allah prepared for the

righteous and Hell-Fire is the abode for penalty or torment, which Allah set up for the disbelievers, in which they will neither die nor live. Believing in Paradise and in the Hell-Fire is true and is a part of Faith. There are many Ayats in the Noble Qur'an and authentic sayings of the Prophet (SAW) confirming this fact. About Jannah (Paradise), Allah said:

'Race one with another in hastening towards Forgiveness from your Lord (Allah), and towards Paradise, the width whereof is as the width of heaven and earth, prepared for those who believe in Allah and His Messengers'.[235]

On the Nar (Hell-Fire), Allah said:

'And fear the Fire, which is prepared for the disbelievers'.[236]

As for the Sayings of the Prophet (SAW), it is enough to refer to the Hadeeth narrated by Imran (RA) regarding the Miraj (ascending of the Prophet (SAW) to the heavens where he certainly saw both Paradise and Hell-Fire). He (RA) reported that the Prophet (SAW) said:

"I looked into the Jannah and saw that the majority of its

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[235] Surat Al-Hadid: 21

[236] Surat Al-Imran: 131

dwellers were poor, and I looked into the Hell-Fire and saw that the majority of its dwellers were women".[237]

Every Muslim should believe that Paradise and Hell-Fire exist now and will never perish. As mentioned earlier the Day of Judgement will truly be a day of Taghabun (the Day of mutual loss and gain): the Day when Allah will gather all mankind for judgement, that will be (i.e. gain for the believers as they will enter Paradise and loss for the disbelievers as they will enter the Hell-fire). This is indicated in Allah's words:

'And whosoever believes in Allah and performs righteous good deeds, He will remit from him his sins, and will admit him to Gardens under which rivers flow (Paradise) to dwell therein forever, that will be the great success. But those who disbelieved (in the Oneness of Allah - Islamic Monotheism) and denied Our Ayât (proofs, evidences, Ayats, lessons, signs, revelations, etc.), they will be the dwellers of the Fire, to dwell therein forever. And worst indeed is that destination'.[238]

It has been mentioned that the righteous will acquire great dignity and honour in the Hereafter. They will be in eternal peace, happiness and in a

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237 Al-Bukhari

238 Surat At-Taghabun: 9-10

state of complete satisfaction because of their sincere Faith. This is signified in Allah's words:

'(It will be said to the pious): O (you) the one in (complete) rest and satisfaction!' Come back to your Lord, Well-pleased (yourself) and well-pleasing unto Him! Enter you, then, among My honoured slaves, and enter you My Paradise!'.[239]

We should believe in Paradise which is confirmed in the Qur'an or the Prophet's (SAW) sayings. Allah said:

'And whosoever believes in Allah and performs righteous good deeds. He will admit him into Gardens under which rivers flow (Paradise), to dwell therein forever. Allah has indeed granted for him an excellent provision'.[240]

The blessing that they enjoy there, no eye has ever seen, no ear has ever heard and no human being has ever thought of. This is indicated in Allah's words:

'No person knows what is kept hidden for them of joy as a reward for what they used to

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[239] Surat Al-Fajr: 27-30

[240] Surat At-Talaq: 11

do'.[241]

The description of Paradise has been outlined in a number of Ayats of the Holy Book and of the Prophet's sayings. For instance: In the Day of Judgement, Allah has prepared for those who will take their books in their right hands:

'(They will be) among thornless lote-trees, among Talh (banana-trees) with fruits piled one above another, in shade long-extended, by water flowing constantly, and fruit in plenty. Whose season is not limited, and their supply will not be cut off. And on couches or thrones, raised high. Verily, We have created them (maidens) of special creation.
And made them virgins. Loving (their husbands only), equal in age. For those on the Right Hand'.[242]

Similarly, in the Hadeeth narrated by Anas bin Malik (RA), The Prophet (SAW) said:

"There is a tree in Paradise (Which is so big and huge that) if a rider travels in its shade for one hundred years, he would not be able to cross it".[243]

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241 Surat As-Sajdah: 17

242 Surat Al-Waqi'ah: 28-38

243 Al-Bukhari

It has also been narrated by Abdullah bin Qais (RA), Allah's Messenger (SAW) said:

"In Paradise there is a pavilion made of a single hollow pearl sixty miles wide, in each corner of which there are wives who will not see those in the other corners; and the believers will visit and enjoy them".[244]

Just as the Gardens give bliss and happiness, so the Fire rewards with penalty and suffering. There is no doubt that the dwellers of the Hell-Fire will find chastisement, which involves pain and agony that they could never imagine. This is indicated in the words of Allah:

'So on that Day, none will punish as He will punish. And none will bind as He will bind'.[245]

Every Muslim should believe that Hell-Fire is existing now and it will never perish and confirm Hell to whom it is confirmed in the Qur'an and the Prophet's (SAW) sayings. Allah the Most High said:

'Verily, Allah has cursed the disbelievers, and has prepared for them a flaming Fire. Wherein they will abide forever, and they will

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[244] Al-Bukhari

[245] Surat Al-Fajr: 25-26

find neither a protector nor a helper'.246

The torture and horror in it cannot be imagined. They will eat bitter plants and the secretion of wounds, and drink boiling water, as described by Allah said:

'Verily, We have prepared for the Zalimin (polytheists, disbelievers, wrong-doers, etc.) a Fire whose walls will be surrounding them. And if they ask for help, they will be granted water like boiling oil that will scald their faces. Terrible the drink, and an evil dwelling'.247

The description of the Hell-Fire and the fact that Allah has created it for the disbelievers is signified by the Hadeeth narrated by Abu Hurairah (RA), Allah's Messenger (SAW) said:

"Your ordinary fire is one of 70 parts of the Hell-Fire." Someone asked, "O Allah's Messenger! This (ordinary) fire would have been sufficient (to torture the disbelievers)", Allah's Messenger (SAW) said: *"The Hell-Fire has 69 parts more than the ordinary worldly fire, each part is as hot as this worldly fire".248*

It has been narrated on the authority of Ibn

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246 Surat Al-Ahzab: 64-65

247 Surat Al-Kahf: 29

248 Al-Bukhari

Mas'ud (RA), he heard the Messenger of Allah (SAW) saying:

"Hell would be brought on that day (Day of Judgement) with seventy bridles and every bridle would be controlled by seventy thousand angels".[249]

As there are gates of Paradise where righteous ones will enter from, there are also seven gates of Hell-Fire through which the disbelievers will enter as a result of their arrogance and rejection of Faith. Allah said:

'It will be said (to the disbelievers): "Enter you the gates of Hell, to abide therein. And (indeed) what an evil abode of the arrogant!" 'And those who kept their duty to their Lord will be led to Paradise in groups, till, when they reach it, and its gates will be opened (before their arrival for their reception) and its keepers will say: Salâmun 'Alaikum (peace be upon you)! You have done well, so enter here to abide therein'.[250]

O Allah! We beg You for that which incites Your Mercy and the means of Your forgiveness, safety from every sin, the benefit from every good deed, success in attaining Paradise and deliverance from

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[249] Muslim

[250] Surat Az-Zumar: 72-73

Fire. Our Lord! Give us in this world that which is good and in the Hereafter that which is good, and save us from the torment of the Fire!.

1.16. Belief in the questioning in the grave

Every Muslim must believe that Allah created death and life. Death is true, and every soul shall have a taste of death. This is indicated in Allah's statement:

'Everyone shall taste death. Then unto Us you shall be returned'.[251]

When death comes, no one can avoid it. Allah said:

'And the stupor of death will come in truth: This is what you have been avoiding!'[252]

Thus, a Muslim's life has a meaning. We are created to worship Allah until death comes. This is signified in Allah's words:

'And worship your Lord until there comes unto you the certainty (i.e. death)'.[253]

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[251] Surat Al-Ankabut: 57

[252] Surat Qaf: 19

[253] Surat Al-Hijr: 99

A fundamental part of Faith is to believe in the Fitnat Al-Qabir (the questioning of the deceased in the grave) and only he who is misguided or wants to mislead others denies it. It is a reality that each person will be questioned after death, whether he is buried or not. Both the body and the soul of the deceased would experience punishment or reward. This is signified by Allah's words:

'Allah will keep firm those who believe, with the word that stands firm in this world and in the Hereafter. And Will cause to go astray those who are wrong-doers, and Allah does what He wills'.[254]

The above Ayat stresses the fact that the believers will be safe from the trial in the grave whereas the disbelievers and the wicked people will be punished in the grave. Allah said:

'Twice shall We punish them and thereafter, they shall be brought back to a great torment'.[255]

In addition to their discomfiture and humiliation in this life, they will face torment and agony after death i.e. in the grave and then they will be brought back to a grievous chastisement on the

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[254] Surat Ibrahim: 27

[255] Surat At-Tauba: 101

Day of Judgement. Allah describes the punishment in the grave of the people of Fir'awn (Pharoah):

'The Fire; they are exposed to it, morning and afternoon, and on the Day when the Hour will be established (it will be said to the angels) 'Cause Pharaoh's people to enter the severest torment'.[256]

The punishment of the grave has also been confirmed in the Hadeeth narrated by Masrook (RA) who reported that Aishah (RA) said: "A Jewess came to her and mentioned the punishment in the grave, saying to her 'May Allah protect you from the punishment of the grave'. Aishah (RA) then asked the Prophet (SAW) about the punishment of the grave. Allah's Messenger replied:

"Yes there is punishment in the grave". Aishah (RA) said: 'I have never seen Allah's Messenger without seeking refuge with Allah from the punishment of the grave".[257]

It has been declared that immediately after death the two angels Munkar and Nakir will ask the dead three questions: Who is your Lord?, What is your religion? And what do you say about this man (Prophet Muhammad (SAW): SAW) who was

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[256] Surat Ghafir: 46

[257] Al-Bukhari

sent to you? The believers will give the correct answer; saying: Allah is my Lord, Islam is my religion and Muhammad (SAW) is my Prophet. While disbelievers or wrong-doers will not be able to answer these questions, saying: I do not know. We believe in the comfort of the grave for the believers and likewise we believe in the punishment of the grave for the disbelievers. Thus, peace and torture in the grave are facts. Narrated Anas (RA), the Prophet (SAW) said:

"When a human being is laid in his grave and his companions return and he even hears their footsteps, two angels come to him and make him sit and ask him: 'what did you use to say about this man, Muhammad (SAW) (SAW)? He will say 'I testify that he is Allah's slave and Messenger'. Then it will be said to him: 'look at your place in the Hell-Fire. Allah has changed for you a place in Paradise instead of it'. The Prophet added, " The dead person will see both his places. But a disbeliever will say to the angels, 'I do not know, but I used to say what the people used to say. It will be said to him 'Neither did you know nor did you take the guidance. Then he will be hit with an iron hammer between his two ears, and he will cry that cry will be heard by whatsoever is near to him except human beings and Jinns".[258]

Narrated Asma' bint Abi Baker (RA), Allah's Messenger (SAW) once stood up delivering a

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[258] Al-Bukhari

religious talk and mentioned the afflictions and trials which people will face in their graves. On hearing this, the Muslims started crying loudly. (Al-Bukhari). It has also been reported by Abu Hurairah (RA) that the Prophet (SAW) used to invoke (Allah), saying:

"O Allah! I seek refuge with you from the punishment in the grave, and from the punishment in the Hell-Fire and from the Fitnat (trial and afflictions etc.) of life and death, and the Fitnat of Al-Masih Ad-Dajjal".[259]

If death is certain, as it is, and the question of the grave is true, we must believe in the future and then we have to prepare ourselves for that moment. We have to keep our duty to Allah and perform righteous deeds, which become a preparation and provision for the grave (life of Barzakh: a state after our visible death and before Judgement). Allah said:

'O you who believe! Fear Allah and keep your duty to Him. And let every person look to what he has sent forth for the morrow, and fear Allah. Verily, Allah is All-Aware of what you do'.[260]

Though constant remembrance of death prevents

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[259] Al-Bukhari

[260] Surat Al-Hashr: 18

us from evil and motivates us towards good morals, it is sad to say that most Muslims are engaged in their worldly matters and that the remembrance of death does not occur to them. Life in this world is temporary and very short. We have to surpass, until we meet our death. This is indicated in Allah's words:

'For every Ummah (a community or a nation), there is a term appointed; when their term is reached, neither can they delay it nor can they advance it an hour (or a moment)'.[261]

So we have to prepare ourselves for death and for the account to be given after death. May Allah give us the ability to remember death and grant us with the Kalima La Ilaha illa Allah (None has the right to be worshipped but Allah) on our lips at the time of death. O Allah! We seek Your protection against the torment of the grave and the trails of life and death. O Allah! Make our lives prone to perform all types of good, and make death a comfort for us from every evil.

1.17. Fearing Allah and despair not of His Mercy.

The fact that fear of Allah is a part of faith has been supported by evidence from the Holy Qur'an

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[261] Surat Yunus: 49

and in the Hadeeth of the Prophet (SAW). Allah said:

'And fear them not, but fear Me, if you are (true) believers'.[262]

The term 'fear' means performing all that Allah has ordered and abstaining from all that He has forbidden. It is necessary to stress the fact that all human beings have been directed to fear God (Allah). This is signified in the words of Allah:

'And verily, We have recommended to the people of the Scripture before you, and to you (O Muslims) that you (all) fear Allah, and keep your duty to Him'.[263]

There are numerous Ayats of the Holy Qur'an including the term fear and extolling it. Allah also said:

'O You who believe! Fear Allah, as He should be'.[264]

He also said:

'O Believers! Fear Allah and speak words

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[262] Surat Al-Imran: 175

[263] Surat An-Nisa: 131

[264] Surat Al-Imran: 102

straight to the point'[265]

Abu Musa (RA) narrated: Allah Messenger (SAW) said:

"Allah gives respite to a Zalim (wrong-doer, oppressor, etc.), but when He grasps (catches) him, He never releases him". Then he recited:
'Such is the grasp of your Lord when He grasps the (population of) towns while they are doing wrong. Verily, His grasp is painful and severe'.[266]

Abu Dhar (RA) narrated that Allah's Messenger (SAW) said:

"Fear Allah wherever you are; and perform good deeds after doing bad actions, the former will wipe out the latter and behave decently towards people".[267]

The value of fearing Allah cannot be estimated or calculated here, however a brief discussion will be presented as follows:

Allah the Most High said:

'O you who believe! If you obey and fear Allah

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[265] Surat Al-Ahzab: 70

[266] Surat Hud: 102

[267] At-At-Tirmidhi

He will grant you Furqan a criterion (to judge between right and wrong or Makhraj i.e. making a way for you to get out from every difficulty), and will expiate for you your sins, and forgive you, and Allah is the Owner of the Great Bounty'.[268]

Ibn Abbas (RA) reported: One day I was riding behind the Prophet (SAW), when he said:

"O boy! I wish to instruct you in some matters. Adhere to the order of Allah and safeguard the commands of Allah, He will be watchful of you. Safeguard His rights, He will be ever with you. When you must beg; beg of Him Alone; and when you stand in need of His assistance; supplicate Allah Alone for help. Remember that if all the people unitedly desire to benefit you, they will be unable to bestow anything upon you except that which Allah has preordained (for you) but if all of them agree to do you harm, they will not be able to afflict you with anything except that which Allah has predestined against you".[269]

However a slave of Allah who has transgressed against himself should never despair of the Mercy of Allah. We have been commanded to hope for the Mercy of Allah as in Allah's statement:

'So whoever hopes for the Meeting with his

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[268] Surat Al-Anfal: 29

[269] Al-Bukhari

Lord, let him work righteousness and associate none as a partner in the worship of his Lord'.[270]

He should always hope for Allah's Mercy and he should know that Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful. Allah said:

'Say: O' Ibadi (My slaves) who have transgressed against themselves (by committing evil deeds and sins)! Despair not of the Mercy of Allah, Verily Allah forgives all sins. Truly, He is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful'.[271]

It has been reported on the authority of Ubada bin Samit (RA), the Messenger of Allah said:

"Whoever testifies that None has the right to be worshipped but Allah Alone with no partner and that Muhammad (SAW) is His slave and Messenger, That Christ is His Slave and Messenger and the Christ is His Word which He communicated to Mary and His spirit, that the Paradise is a fact and Hell is a fact, Allah would make him (he who affirms these truths) enter Paradise whatever his deeds may be".[272]

The above Hadeeth shows the significance of

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[270] Surat Al-Kahf: 110

[271] Surat Az-Zumar: 53

[272] Al-Bukhari and Muslim

believing in the Oneness of Allah and believing in His Messenger Muhammad (SAW) . To do this sincerely from the heart, Allah will protect him/her from Hell. It has been narrated on the authority of Jabir (RA), a Bedouin came to the Messenger of Allah (SAW) and asked: Oh Messenger of Allah! What are the two imperatives that lead to Paradise or Hell. He answered:

"He who dies associating no one with Allah will enter Paradise, and he who dies associating a partner with Allah will enter the Fire".[273]

Abu Hurairah (RA) narrated that he heard the Messenger of Allah (SAW) saying:

"By the One in Whose hand there is my life, if you had not committed sins, Allah would bring a people who would then commit sins and would seek forgiveness from Allah and Allah would forgive them".[274]

Anas bin Malik (RA) narrated that a man came to the Prophet (SAW) and said: 'O Messenger of Allah, I have committed an ordained crime. So execute it on me'. He did not ask him about it, and then came the prayer (time). So he prayed with the Messenger of Allah (SAW). When the Messenger finished the prayer, the man stood and

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[273] Muslim

[274] Muslim

said: 'O Messenger of Allah! I have committed an ordained crime. So execute the ordinance of Allah upon me'. The Prophet (SAW) asked: *"Haven't you prayed with us?"* 'Yes' he said. The Prophet of Allah (SAW) said: *"Verily, Allah has forgiven you"*.[275]

It is a great virtue when we take heed of the Hereafter and place our hope in Allah's Mercy. The real understanding of the value of the inner life makes us build our hopes not on the vanities of this world, but on Allah's Grace. Allah said:

'Is one who is obedient to Allah, prostrating himself or standing (in prayer) during the hours of the night, fearing the Hereafter and hoping for the Mercy of his Lord (like one who disbelieves)?'.[276]

The reward of having hope in Allah's Mercy has been demonstrated by an authentic Hadeeth which is narrated by Abu Hurairah (RA) who reported that Allah's Messenger (SAW) said: Allah says:

"I am towards every slave of Mine as he forms an idea about Me in his mind. I am with him wherever he remembers Me. Allah is more pleased with the repentance of His

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[275] Al-Bukhari and Muslim

[276] Surat Az-Zumar: 9

bondsman than one of you who finds out again in the desert his lost thing. He who approaches Me over a distance of a hand's breadth, I proceed towards him two arms length. If a bondsman of Mine comes towards Me walking, I proceed towards him running".[277]

Anas (RA) also narrated that he heard the Messenger of Allah (SAW) saying:

"Allah, the Exalted, has said: Son of Adam, I shall go on forgiving you so long as you pray to Me and aspire for My forgiveness whatever may be your faults. Son of Adam, I do not care even if your sins should pile up to the sky and you should beg pardon of Me, I would forgive you. Son of Adam if you come to me with an earthful of sins and meet Me, not associating a partner with Me, I would come to you with an earthful of forgiveness".[278]

Consequently, we should confide our cause unto Allah and associate between fear and hope. In this context the Noble Qur'an points out that Allah is:

'The Forgiver of sin, the Acceptor of repentance, the Severe in punishment, the Bestower (of favours), Lâ ilaha illa Huwa (none has the right to be worshipped but He), to Him is the final return'.[279]

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[277] Al-Bukhari and Muslim

[278] At-Tirmidhi

[279] Surat Ghafir: 3

We should not feel despair of the Mercy of Allah Who is the Oft-forgiver of sin, the Acceptor of repentance.

'Our Lord! Verily, we have heard the call of one (Muhammad (SAW)) calling to Faith: 'Believe in your Lord', and we have believed. Our Lord! Forgive us our sins and remit from us our evil deeds, and make us die in the state of righteousness along with Al-Abrâr (those who are obedient to Allah and follow strictly His Orders). Our Lord! Grant us what You promised unto us through Your Messengers and disgrace us not on the Day of Resurrection, for You never break (Your) Promise'.[280]

1.18. Total and perfect reliance on Allah

Knowledge of the unseen is the domain of Allah Alone, for this reason, humans must turn to Allah Alone to seek guidance, consultation, strength and trusting everything to His Care. We must put our trust completely in Allah. His care is for all, and He is Allah Most Gracious. The fact that entrusting Allah or seeking His help and protection is a part of Faith has been indicated in the Holy Qur'an and the Hadeeth of the Prophet (SAW). Allah said:

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[280] Surat Al-Imran: 193-194

'and put your trust in Allah if you have faith'.[281]

It is not only that we must worship Allah Alone, but also we must ask for His aid only. This is indicated in the following Ayat:

'You (Alone) we worship, and You (Alone) we seek for help'.[282]

He also said:

'Say: "I seek refuge with (Allah) the Lord of mankind. The King of mankind'.[283]

We absolutely believe that there is none other than Allah worthy of worshipping and none can help us except Him and Him Alone. Allah said:

'Say (O Muhammad (SAW)): "I possess no power of benefit or hurt to myself except as Allah wills'.[284]

Those who have Faith must believe that they have no power over any good or harm to themselves except as Allah wishes. This is signified in Allah's

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[281] Surat Al-Ma'idah: 23

[282] Surat Al-Fatihah: 5

[283] Surat An-Nas: 1-2

[284] Surat Al-Araf: 188

words:

'Say (O Muhammad (SAW)): "Who is the Lord of the heavens and the earth?" Say: "(It is) Allah." Say: "Have you then taken (for worship) Auliyâ' (protectors, etc.) other than Him, such as have no power either for benefit or for harm to themselves?'.[285]

Allah also said:

'Say: "Who then has any power at all (to intervene) on your behalf with Allah, if He intends you hurt or intends you benefit? Nay, but Allah is Ever All-Aware of what you do'.[286]

These Ayats impress upon us the importance of Faith in Allah, encouragement for having trust in Him. He is sufficient for mankind. He gives us sustenance and provides us facilities of residence and living. Due thanks should be addressed to Allah Alone. We worship Him and ask for His aid only. Allah knows our faults better than us or anyone else. It is no use hiding anything from Him. We must put all our trust entirely in Him. His care is for all, and He is Allah the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. He (SWT) said:

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[285] Surat Ar-Ra'd: 16

[286] Surat Al-Fath: 11

'And put your trust (O Muhammad (SAW)) in the Ever Living One Who dies not, and glorify His Praises, and Sufficient is He as the All-Knower of the sins of His slaves'.[287]

Worldly men put their trust in sophisticated things, whereas the righteous man only in Allah. And whosoever puts his trust in Allah, then He will suffice him. This is signified in the words of Allah:

'And why should we not put our trust in Allah while He indeed has guided us our ways. And we shall certainly bear with patience all the hurt you may cause us, and in Allah (Alone) let those who trust, put their trust'.[287]

Umar bin Al-Khatab (RA) reported: I heard the Messenger of Allah (SAW) saying:

"If you all had relied on Allah with due reliance, He would have certainly given you provision as He supplies provisions to birds who get up hungry in the morning and return with full belly at dusk".[288]

Trust in Allah does not mean that one should not act. What it really means is that along with having

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[287] Surat Al-Furqan: 58

[287] Surat Ibrahim: 12

[288] At-Tirmidhi

trust in Allah, one should perform Noble deeds whether verbal or physical to attain Allah's help. The true Faith is one, which attached with its concrete practice is in fact the production of Faith. Anas (RA) reported that he heard Allah's Messenger (SAW) saying:

"When a man goes out of his house and utters: In the name of Allah; I trust in Allah; there is no might and no power (to resist evil) but in Allah, the following (words) will be said to him at that time: You are guided, defended and protected. The devil will go far away from him".[289]

The instructions described in this Hadeeth reveal the significance of ultimate confidence and trust in Allah. It indicates that one who has trust in Allah is surely helped by Him. Evil has no authority or influence on those who put their trust in Allah. It is good to express this trust in outward actions. Man is weak at best, and he should seek strength for his will in Allah's help and protection.

O Allah! Controller of the hearts directs our hearts to your obedience. We ask You for security in this world and in the Hereafter.

1.19. Al-Haya (Shyness or Modesty)

This term covers a large number of concepts. It

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[289] Abu Dawud, At-Tirmidhi and Nasa'i

may mean modesty, self-respect, honour, etc. Al-Haya is of two kinds: good and bad; The good of al-haya is to be ashamed to commit a crime or a thing which Allah and His Messenger (SAW) has forbidden, and the bad of Al-Haya is to be ashamed to do a thing, which Allah and His Messenger (SAW) ordered to do. Ibn Umar (RAHM) narrated: Once Allah's Messenger passed by an Ansari (man) who was admonishing his brother regarding Al-Haya: On that Allah's Messenger (SAW) said:
"Leave him as Al-Haya is a part of Faith".[290]

Modesty plays an efficient role in preventing man from being rebellious and keeps him free from sins. Modesty detains man from following wrong ways and restrains him from immoral acts. For this reasons, Imran bin Husain (RA) has reported that the Messenger of Allah (SAW) said:
"Modesty does not bring anything except good".[291]

Modesty is the landmark and a criterion of Faith and the Islamic social life. So indulging in shameless things is disgraced and condemned by Allah and His Messenger (SAW). It has been reported by Abu Masud Al-Ansari (RA), the Prophet (SAW) said:
"One of the sayings of the previous Prophets is that: if

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[290] Al-Bukhari

[291] Muslim

you don't feel ashamed, then do whatever you like".[292]

This Hadeeth indicates that when a person loses the feeling of shame, then he does not mind doing anything.

We have been told by the Prophet (SAW), virtue is noble behaviour, which is a fundamental principle of modesty. A person's excellent behaviour resolves the extent of his/her Faith. This is indicated in the Hadeeth narrated by Abu Hurairah (RA), Allah's Messenger (SAW) said:

"The most perfect man in his Faith amongst the believers is the one whose behaviour is most excellent".[293]

Our Prophet Muhammad (SAW) used to abstain from acting or saying anything disgraceful, shameful or offensive, and hated to see people doing or uttering such things in front of him. This is indicated in the Hadeeth narrated Abu Sa'id Al-Khudri (RA): "The Prophet (SAW) was shier than a veiled virgin girl".[294]

So a Muslim should follow the example of the Prophet (SAW) whose conduct was entirely according to the Qur'an. This is signified when

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[292] Al-Bukhari

[293] At-Tirmidhi

[294] Al-Bukhari

Aisha (RA) was asked about the Prophet's conduct and morality, she replied: 'His conduct was the Qur'an'. Allah has described the Prophet's sublime character saying:

'And verily, you (O Muhammad (SAW)) are on an exalted standard of character'.[295]

Narrated Ans (RA): 'Allah's Messenger (SAW) was the best of all the people in behaviour'.[296]

Allah's Messenger (SAW) always used to develop moral values among his companions. He used to consider a person with the highest moral sense as the best among people. When he was asked about the deed, which will be foremost to lead a man to Paradise, he replied: *'Fear of Allah and good conduct'*.[297]

It should be emphasised here that modesty is a code of conduct. For this reason it is crucial for us to develop this virtue (Shyness/Modesty) and to refine the behaviour in ourselves and in the heart of our children. We have to turn away from the wickedness of our tongues, to avoid immoral pursuits and to refrain from bad habits.

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[295] Surat Al-Qalam: 4

[296] Al-Bukhari and Muslim

[297] At-Tirmidhi

O Allah! We beseech You for guidance, piety, chastity and contentment. We seek refuge in You from undesirable manners, deeds and aspirations.

1.20. To like for one's (Muslim's) brother what one likes for himself

Allah has joined our hearts in love so that by His grace we became brothers. We must be mild and compassionate to our Muslim brothers and sisters. Moreover, we have to sympathise with each other and be together in prosperity and in adversity in affluence and in suffering. Faith cannot be absolutely realised until this ideal is accomplished. This is signified in Allah's words:

'The believers, men and women, are Auliyâ (helpers, supporters, friends, protectors) of one another'.[298]

We should be fair and just to others even when they are not fair to us personally. We should view every human being as a member of the family of the children of Adam (AS). The true believer should be fair in his dealings with all people, as he would like them to be with him, and to wish for his Muslim brother what he wishes for himself. This has also been indicated in the Hadeeth narrated by Anas (RA): the Prophet (SAW) said:

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[298] Surat At-Taubah: 71

"None of you will have Faith till he likes for his (Muslim) brother what he likes for himself".[299]

That is why Allah has also warned us from division amongst ourselves or fall into disputations after receiving guidance. He commanded us to:

'And hold fast, all of you together, to the Rope of Allah (i.e. this Qur'an), and be not divided among yourselves, and remember Allah's Favour on you, for you were enemies one to another but He joined your hearts together, so that, by His Grace, you became brethren (in Islamic Faith)'.[300]

The believers, men and women, are supporters and protectors of one another. Showing love, affection and kind treatment to your brother is a sign of compassion, which Allah offers mankind. Allah said:

'The believers are nothing else than brothers (in Islamic religion). So make reconciliation between your brothers, and fear Allah, that you may receive mercy'.[301]

The concept of brotherhood has been emphasised

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[299] Al-Bukhari

[300] Surat Al-Imran: 103

[301] Surat Al-Hujurat: 10

and is considered to be the greatest social ideal of Islam. We have been commanded to enjoin unity in the Muslim community and to co-operate with one another. So we should not oppress one another. We have to exchange mutual kindness, compassion and sympathy and to be like one body. Narrated Abu Musa (RA), Allah's Messenger (SAW) said:
"The relationship of the believer with an other believer is like (the bricks of) a building, each strengthens the other".[302]

We are advised to live like family members. To love good for everybody, and to offer help when a brother is in need of it, try to relieve him of adversity and support him when he is oppressed. At the same time we are required to keep our fellow Muslim from committing oppression, which is really indicating a very high moral support. This is signified in the Hadeeth of the Prophet (SAW). Anas (RA) reported: Allah Messenger (SAW) said:

"Help your brother, whether he is an oppressor or is oppressed.". A man enquired.' O Messenger of Allah! I help him when he is oppressed, but how can I help him when he is an oppressor?'. He (SAW) said, "You can keep him from committing oppression. That will be your help to him".[303]

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[302] Al-Bukhari

[303] Al-Bukhari and Muslim

To show mutual hatred or enmity to one another is forbidden. This goes against the concept of Faith. Each Muslim is required to articulate goodwill to his fellow Muslim. Narrated Abu Hurairah (RA) Allah's Messenger (SAW) said:

"A Muslim is a brother to a Muslim. He should neither deceive him nor lie to him, nor leave him without assistance".[304]

The bond of love among Muslims has been further strengthened to the extent that we are commanded to cover faults and shortcomings of our fellow Muslim. Narrated Abu Hurairah (RA), the Prophet (SAW) said:

"Allah will cover up on the Day of Judgement the faults of the one who covers the faults of the others in this world".[305]

Our Lord! Let not our hearts deviate (from the truth) after You have guided us, and grant us mercy from You. O Allah! Make us from those who like for Muslim brothers what they like for themselves, and cover our defects in this world and in the Hereafter.

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[304] At-Tirmidhi

[305] Muslim

1.21. Love and Hate for Allah's Sake

It is essential upon us to examine the nature of our love and our hate and to assess whether it conforms to the command of Allah and His Messenger (SAW). Islam is the only straight path, which will transport us to realising our goal. The evidence that sincere love for the sake of Allah is a part of Faith has been signified in Allah's words and the Hadeeth of the Prophet (SAW). Allah the Most High said:

'Muhammad (SAW) is the Messenger of Allah, and those who are with him are severe against disbelievers, and merciful among themselves'.[306]

Narrated by Ibn Abbas (RA), the Prophet (SAW) once said to Abu Bakr (RA):

"Which aspect of Faith is most firm?" He said 'Allah and His Messenger know better'. The Prophet (SAW) then said. "Co-operation for the sake of Allah, love for the sake of Allah".[307]

The companions in this journey must be friends who love one another and help each other to reach their goal. Friendship of this manner is

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[306] Surat Al-Fatih: 27

[307] Muslim

friendship for the sake of Allah. Thus, you love for Allah and hate for Allah's sake. The pious and the religious are the people deserving of our love, as they can best help us in providing provisions for the Hereafter. He who diverts from this path should be denounced. To gain the love of Allah, you must first love His Prophet (SAW) and the principals of Islam. Anas (RA) reported: The Prophet (SAW) has said:
"whoever possesses the following three will have the sweetness of Faith:

1. The one to whom Allah and His Messenger become dearer than anything else.
2. Who loves a person and he loves him only for Allah's sake.
3. Who detests converting to atheism, as he detests to be thrown into the Hell-Fire".[308]

In loving anybody before Allah and His Messenger (SAW) means that you are raising him higher than Allah and His Messenger, whereas Allah has commanded us:

'O you who believe! Do not put (yourselves) forward before Allah and His Messenger, and fear Allah Verily! Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing'.[309]

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[308] Al-Bukhari

[309] Surat Al-Hujurat: 1

In matters of love or hate or in matters of taking judgements we should not decide before Allah and His Messenger (SAW). Simple loving and hating is capricious, but what is actually unlawful is following one's love and hate without guidance from Allah. This is why Allah says:

'O Dawud (David)! Verily! We have placed you as a successor on earth, so judge you between men in truth (and justice) and follow not your desire for it will mislead you from the Path of Allah. Verily! Those who wander astray from the Path of Allah (shall) have a severe torment, because they forgot the Day of Reckoning'.[310]

Whenever a person loves another, he should love him for Allah's Sake. Allah will grant an exalted position to such people who love one another for His Sake. This has been indicated in the Hadeeth narrated by Muath bin Jabal (RA), Allah's Messenger (SAW) said:

"Allah the Exalted has said: Those who love one another for the sake of My Glory and Greatness - Shall have pulpits of light on the Day of Resurrection: the Prophets and martyrs shall envy them".[311]

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310 Surat Sad: 26

311 At-Tirmidhi

Thus it is clearly shown that loving one another for the sake of Allah (SWT) is considered as a means through which people will enter Paradise. It has been narrated on the authority of Abu Hurairah (RA), the Messenger of Allah (SAW) said:

"By Him in Whose Hand my soul is! You shall by no means enter Paradise until you believe, and you shall by no means believe until you love one another".[312]

Special protection will be provided by Allah for those who love and hate for His Sake. This is indicated in the Hadeeth narrated by Abu Hurairah (RA), the Prophet (SAW) said:
"Seven people will be shaded by Allah under His Shade on the Day of Resurrection when there will be no shade except His, they are:
a just ruler, a young man who has been brought up in the worship of Allah, a man whose heart is attached to the mosque, two persons who love each other for Allah's sake, and they meet and part in Allah's Cause only, a man who refuses the call of a charming woman of Noble birth for illegal sexual intercourse with her and says: I fear Allah. A person who practises charity so secretly that his left hand does not know what his right hands has given and a person who remembers Allah in seclusion and his eyes become flooded with tears".[313]

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312 Muslim

313 Al-Bukhari

In another Hadeeth Abu Hurairah (RA) reported that Allah's Messenger (SAW) said:

"On the Day of Resurrection Allah will say: 'Where are those who have mutual love for My Glory's sake? Today I shall shelter them in My Shade when there is no shade but Mine'".[314]

In addition to the merit of shared affection and co-operation with each other for the sake of Allah, it is venerable to tell those whom one loves for the sake of Allah, of this love. It has been narrated on the authority of Anas bin Malik (RA) that a man was with the Messenger of Allah (SAW) when another man passed and the former said: Messenger of Allah! I have affection for that one. The Messenger of Allah (SAW) asked: *'Have you informed him?'* He said: 'No'. The Messenger of Allah (SAW) said: *'Tell him'*. So he went up to the man and said to him: 'I love you for the sake of Allah'; and the other replied: 'May Allah, for Whose sake you love me, love you'.[315]

Love and hate to one's own taste without the sanction of Allah and His Messenger (SAW) is to follow one's desire without guidance from Allah. Allah basically stated in many Ayats that love should be based on following His guidance and

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[314] Muslim

[315] Abu Dawud

the teaching of the Prophet (SAW). This is signified in the words of Allah:

'But if they answer you not (i.e. do not believe in your doctrine of Islamic Monotheism, nor follow you), then know that they only follow their own lusts. And who is more astray than one who follows his own lusts, without guidance from Allah? Verily! Allah guides not the people who are Zâlimûn (wrong-doers, disobedient to Allah, and polytheists)'.[316]

Consequently, those who love each other for the sake of worldly benefits and depart from the requirements of the Qur'an and the Sunnah are classed as people of desire. In fact we are commanded not to follow desires and the lusts of our hearts. Allah said:

'So follow not the lusts (of your hearts), lest you may avoid justice'[317]

He also said:

'And follow not your desire for it will mislead you from the Path of Allah'.[318]

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316 Surat Al-Qasas: 50

317 Surat An-Nisa: 135

318 Surat Sad: 26

This illustrates that the basic principle is that man's love and hate should correspond to the Divine law. Allah will confer His love on those who love one another for His sake.

So love should be for the sake of Allah and meeting each other or departing from each other should be for the sake of Allah. May Allah make us firm in our Faith in this journey of love and hate until we reach the ultimate goal.

1.22. To detest returning to infidelity, as detesting to be thrown into the Hell-Fire

As most men are disobedient, it is predictable that there should be Murtadeen (people who turn back from their Faith) even from such a religion of reason and common sense as Islam. However, there is a warning to the Muslim body that they should not repeat the history of the Jews, and become arrogant as to depart from the spirit of Allah's teaching. If they do, the loss will be their own. There has been a clear warning against those who believe and then reject Faith. This is signified in Allah's words:

'Verily, those who believe, then disbelieve, then believe (again), and (again) disbelieve, and go on increasing in disbelief; Allah will not forgive them, nor guide them on the

(Right) Way'.[319]

It has been mentioned that Ridah (converting to atheism) is disbelief and whosoever becomes Murtad and dies as a disbeliever; he will be a companion of the Fire and will abide therein. Allah said:

'And whosoever of you turns back from his religion and dies as a disbeliever, then his deeds will be lost in this life and in the Hereafter, and they will be the dwellers of the Fire. They will abide therein forever'.[320]

Narrated Abu Hurairah (RA), the Prophet (SAW) has said:

"Whoever possesses the following three will have the sweetness of Faith:

1. The one to whom Allah and His Messenger become dearer than anything else.
2. Who loves a person and he loves him only for Allah's sake.
3. Who detests converting to atheism, as he detests to be thrown into the Hell-Fire".[321]

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319 Surat An-Nisa: 137

320 Surat Al-Baqarah: 217

321 Al-Bukhari

We have been informed that this person who converts to atheism deserves to be killed. Narrated Abdullah bin Umar (RAHM), Allah's Messenger (SAW) said:

"The blood of a Muslim who confesses that none has the right to be worshiped but Allah) and that I am the Messenger of Allah, cannot be shed except in three cases: (1) life for life in case of intentional murder without right (Al-Qisas: Law of Equality in punishment); (2) A married person who commits illegal sexual intercourse, and (3) The one who reverts from Islam and leaves the group of Muslims".[322]

We have to remember that turning away from Islam does not cause any harm to Allah's Kingdom. On the contrary, Allah will produce another generation whom He will love as they will love Him. Allah's bounty is not confined to one group or section of humanity. He can always raise up people who will follow the true spirit of Islam. Allah said:

'O you who believe! Whoever from among you turns back from his religion (Islam), Allah will bring a people whom He will love and they will love Him; humble towards the believers, stern towards the disbelievers, fighting in the Way of Allah, and never afraid of the blame of

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322 Al-Bukhari

the blamers'.[323]

The days of Ignorance were the days of tribalism and feuds. It is the mission of Islam to take mankind away from that false mental attitude, towards the attitude of Unity. If our Faith is certain, Allah will guide us to that Unity. This is indicated in Allah's words:

'Do they then seek the judgement of (the Days of) Ignorance? And who is better in judgement than Allah for a people who have firm Faith'.[324]

Narrated Ibn Abbas (RA), the Prophet (SAW) said:

"The most hated persons to Allah are three: (1) A person who deviates from the right conduct, i.e., an evil doer, in the Haram (sanctuaries of Makkah and Al-Madinah); (2) a person who wants that the traditions of the pre-Islamic period of Ignorance should remain in Islam; and (3) a person who seeks to shed somebody's blood without any right".[325]

It has been mentioned that those who deliberately rejected Allah's truth after guidance was clearly

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323 Al-Maidah: 54

324 Surat Al-Maidah: 50

325 Al-Bukhari

shown to them, Shaytan (the devil) has instigated them and raised them up with false hopes. This is signified by Allah's words:

'Verily, those who have turned back (have apostated) as disbelievers after the guidance has been manifested to them, Shaytan (Satan) has beautified for them (their false hopes), and (Allah) prolonged their term (age)'.[326]

Such men are entirely in the hands of Shaytan (Satan). They follow his inspirations, and their hopes are built on his deceptions. Our Lord! Forgive us our sins and remit from us our evil deeds, and make us die in the state of righteousness along with Al-Abrâr (those who are obedient to Allah and follow strictly His Orders).

1.23. Practising Al-Ikhlas (sincerity) and having intentions for all actions.

It has been pointed out that exercising Ikhlas (sincerity) and practising good intention for all actions, apparent and hidden is the basic foundation of Faith. It must be emphasized that the acceptance of any righteous deed depends on it being performed for Allah's sake without any showing off. People lose most in respect of their deeds because either they deny Allah's Signs or

[326] Surat Muhammad (SAW): 25

they perform deeds in order to be praised and to gain fame. As a result their deeds will be in vain and on the Day of Judgement Allah will give them no weight. This is indicated in Allah's words:

'Say (O Muhammad (SAW)): "Shall We tell you the greatest losers in respect of (their) deeds? "Those whose efforts have been wasted in this life while they thought that they were acquiring good by their deeds. They are those who deny the Ayât (proofs, evidences, Ayats, lessons, signs, revelations, etc.) of their Lord and the Meeting with Him (in the Hereafter). So their works are in vain, and on the Day of Resurrection, We shall not give them any weight'.[327]

Ikhlas (sincerity) means that each Muslim must have true faith in Allah and He should be worshipped with full dedication. It is a must for every action. It should be present in the heart of each Muslim and reflected physically by performing noble deeds, seeking the Pleasure of Allah. For this reason, we have been commanded by Allah to practice Ikhlas in every righteous deed. This is signified in Allah's words:

'And they were commanded not, but that they should worship Allah, and worship none but

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[327] Surat Al-Kahf: 104-105

Him Alone (abstaining from ascribing partners to Him), and offer prayers perfectly and give Az-Zakah and that is the right religion'.[328]

This Ayat displays the eternal principle of Islam which is 'Ikhlas' regarding all acts of worship. Offering Allah sincere devotion indicates that a Muslim should be truthful in his faith and his intention while performing acts should be totally for Allah's Sake (i.e. to seek the Pleasure of Allah Alone); otherwise, it will not be accepted by Him. Everyone will be rewarded or punished according to his aim and intention. Narrated Umar bin Al-Khatab (RA), Allah's Messenger (SAW) said:

"The deeds are considered by the intentions, and a person will get the reward according to his intention".[329]

It is, then, crucial that every righteous act should be based on sincerity and a good aim. Abu Hurairah (RA) narrated: Allah's Messenger (SAW) said:

"Allah looks not to your figures, nor to your wealth but He looks to your hearts and deeds".[330]

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[328] Surat Al-Baiyinah: 5

[329] Al-Bukhari and Muslim

[330] Muslim

Narrated Jarir bin Abdullah (RA), I gave the Baia (pledge) to Allah's Messenger (SAW) for the following:

"1. To perform prayers.
2. To pay the Az-Zakah
3. And to be sincere and true to every Muslim".[331]

There are some people who claim to be believers, but are not sincere; they pray in front of others, not out of fear and love of Allah, but in the hope that people will notice them. They may give a lot of money in charity when they are really seeking some hidden gain or false glory for themselves. Their motives are not pure. Therefore, Allah has considered them as hypocrites. This is signified in His words:

'Verily, the hypocrites seek to deceive Allah, but it is He Who deceives them. And when they stand up for As-Salah (the prayer), they stand with laziness and to be seen of men, and they do not remember Allah but little'.[332]

The sincere are only those who believe in their spiritual responsibility and act in Allah's sight. They perform good deeds without any thought of reward or the motive of gaining someone else's

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[331] Al-Bukhari

[332] Surat An-Nisa: 142

favour: the sole motive in their minds is the desire to attain the Good Pleasure of Allah. This is signified in the words of Allah:

'He who spends his wealth for increase in self-purification. And have in his mind no favour from anyone for which a reward is expected in return. Except only the desire to seek the Face (Countenance) of his Lord, the Most High. He surely will be pleased (when he will enter Paradise)'.[333]

O You, Possessor of Glory and Honour! Grant us the sense of piety and purify our souls, as You are the best to purify them.

1.24. Exercising Patience

Many times in life, people are faced with problems and calamities, which might affect their attitude towards their Lord and shake their Faith. But in reality these problems are only there to test our Faith and erase our sins as if we were born again with a clean shiny heart. There are numerous Ayats of the Holy Qur'an including patience and extolling it. Allah the Most High said:

'And certainly, We shall test you with something of fear, hunger, loss of wealth, lives and

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[333] Surat Al-Lail: 18-21

fruits, but give glad tidings to the patient'.[334]

Islam does not permit a Muslim to ask Allah to cause problems for him, because this would obviously bring about his own destruction. However should ever a problem or a difficult situation occur, one must ask Allah to remove the situation and then be patient. Allah said:

'O you who believe! Seek help in patience and As-Salah (the prayer). Truly! Allah is with As-Sâbirin (the patient ones.)'.[335]

Therefore, a person is considered to have patience when he does not moan and groan over a difficult situation, but instead he should thank his Lord for it. Besides his human wisdom, his kindness and nobility of character, our Prophet (SAW) has been ordained by Allah to exercise patience under circumstances of extraordinary provocation. This is signified in the words of Allah:

'And endure you patiently (O Muhammad (SAW)), your patience is not but from Allah. And grieve not over them (polytheists and pagans, etc.), and be not distressed because of what they plot'.[336]

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[334] Surat Al-Baqarah: 155

[335] Surat Al-Baqarah: 153

[336] Surat An-Nahl: 127

Abu Sa'id Al-Khudri (RA) reported: that certain people of the Ansar begged of the Messenger of Allah (SAW) and he gives them; they again begged of him and he gave them whatever he possessed. Then the Prophet (SAW) said:

"whosoever would be independent, Allah will keep him independent; and whosoever would be patient, Allah will give him patience and no one is granted a gift that is better and more extensive than patience".[337]

We are told that patience provides a Muslim with steadfastness, which is the mark of perfect Faith. Whatever difficulties one has to face, he should endure it with patience. This is indicated in the Hadeeth narrated by Abu Yahya Suhaib bin Sinan (RA), Allah's Messenger (SAW) said:

"How excellent is the case of a Faithful slave; there is good for him in everything and this is not the case with any one except him. If prosperity attends him, he expresses gratitude to Allah and that is good for him; and if adversity falls him, he endures it patiently and that is better for him".[338]

Abu Hurairah (RA) narrated that he heard the Prophet (SAW) saying:

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[337] Al-Bukhari and Muslim

[338] Muslim

"Never a believer is stricken with discomfort, hardship or illness, grief, a mental worry or even hurt with a thorn that his sins are not expiated for him".[339]

We should always be patient over calamities as it is a blessing and mercy from Allah. One must also be forbearing in adversity. For one will surely encounter hardship, then if he is not forbearing he will do more harm than good. As Luqman said to his son:

'O my son! Aqim-is-Salah (perform As-Salah), enjoin (people) for Al-Ma'rûf (Islamic Monotheism and all that is good), and forbid (people) from Al-Munkar (i.e. disbelief in the Oneness of Allah, polytheism of all kinds and all that is evil and bad), and bear with patience whatever befall you. Verily! These are some of the important commandments ordered by Allah with no exemption'.[340]

This is why Allah has enjoined patience upon all of His Messengers and those who preach His religion. As he did with his Messenger Muhammad (SAW) when He commanded him to start preaching. Allah said:

'O you (Muhammad (SAW)) enveloped (in

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[339] Al-Bukhari and Muslim

[340] Surat Luqman: 17

garments)! Arise and warn! And your Lord (Allah) magnify! And your garments purify! And keep away from Ar-Rujz (the idols)! And give not a thing in order to have more (or consider not your deeds of Allah's obedience as a favour to Allah)! And be patient for the sake of your Lord (i.e. perform your duty to Allah)!'[341]

Here Allah's Messenger who has been appointed to preach mankind was instructed to warn and commanded to be patient just as those steadfast Messengers who were patient. Therefore any person who preaches to people should endure with patience and forbear anything they may say. As Allah has commanded His Messenger (SAW):

'And be patient (O Muhammad (SAW)) with what they say, and keep away from them in a good way'.[342]

Narrated Abu Musa (RA), the Prophet (SAW) said:

"None is more patient than Allah against the harmful saying He hears from the people, they ascribe a son to Him, yet He gives them health and provision".[343]

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341 Surat Al- Muddathir: 1-7

342 Surat Al-Muzzammil: 10

343 Al-Bukhari

We are told that the reward is always with the patient, the self-possessed, those who do not lose their temper or forget their own principles of conduct. It is always better to restrain ourselves and be patient. In controversy, we must always adopt a middle, moderate, regular course whereby we will receive our rewards and reach our target (Paradise). Allah said:

'Say (O Muhammad (SAW)): "O My slaves who believe (in the Oneness of Allah Islamic Monotheism), be afraid of your Lord (Allah) and keep your duty to Him. Good is (the reward) for those who do good in this world, and Allah's earth is spacious (so if you cannot worship Allah at a place, then go to another)! Only those who are patient shall receive their rewards in full, without reckoning'.[344]

We ask Allah to give us the ability to be patient and help the problems of other Muslims who are in difficulty. Our Lord! Pour forth on us patience and make us victorious over the disbelieving people. O Allah! Grant us patience in any disorder, instability and afflictions and rank us among the patient people.

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[344] Surat Az-Zumar: 10

1.25. Accomplishment of one's promise or covenant

It has been mentioned in the Qur'an that Allah's Messengers are characterised by being true to what they promised. We have been commanded by Allah and His Messenger (SAW) to fulfil all covenants and every engagement. Allah said:

'O you who believe! Fulfil (your) 'uqud' (obligations)'.[345]

The word 'uqud' (obligations) is a comprehensive term. It implies to many features. Firstly, there are the divine obligations that arise from our spiritual relationship with Allah. He created us, implanted in us all faculties and provided us with all gifts and means, which respond to our needs. All these gifts create corresponding obligations, which we must observe. Secondly, in the material life, we undertake mutual duties and responsibilities (e.g. we make promises, treaties, we enter into business or social contracts, etc): we must faithfully fulfil all obligations in all these affairs. Allah has stated:

'And fulfil (every) covenant. Verily! the covenant, will be questioned about'.[346]

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[345] Surat Al-Ma'idah: 1

[346] Surat Al-Isra: 34

The word 'covenant' referred to what would be interpreted in the general sense to mean useful or legal contracts connected with promises or undertakings given by a person or understood in the terms of his appointment. These contracts should be respected and fulfilled. All conventions in a civil society should be respected unless they are morally wrong or stand against Faith. In this context Allah praised those who fulfil the covenants which they have made saying:

'And who fulfil their covenant when they make it, and who are As-Sâbirin (the patient ones, etc.) in extreme poverty and ailment (disease) and at the time of fighting (during the battles). Such are the people of the truth and they are Al-Muttaqûn (the pious)'.[347]

We are commanded to fulfil covenants. It is a Wasiat (Will or Command) of Allah to all mankind. This is signified in Allah's words:

'Whenever you give your word (i.e. judge between men or give evidence, etc.), say the truth even if a near relative is concerned, and fulfil the Covenant of Allah, This He commands you, that you may remember'.[348]

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[347] Surat Al-Baqarah: 177

[348] Surat Al-An'am: 152

Disregarding these obligations expose a person to Allah's punishment. Allah has stated:

'Those who break Allah's Covenant after ratifying it, and sever what Allah has ordered to be joined (as regards Allah's Religion of Islamic Monotheism, and to practise its legal laws on the earth and also as regards keeping good relations with kith and kin), and do mischief on earth, it is they who are the losers'.[349]

A Muslim should therefore faithfully observe the duties taught to him/her by Islam. A Muslim should understand that every pledge taken, or promise made, is a covenant before Allah and should be truly practised and fulfilled. They are devotees of Allah, and they must perform all the undertaken contracts. Allah has commanded the believers to fulfil all obligations and keep agreements. We shall be called upon to account for this in the Day of Judgement. It is most hateful in the sight of Allah to break a covenant after being assured. He says:

'And fulfil the Covenant of Allah (Bai'a: pledge for Islam) when you have covenanted, and break not the oaths after you have confirmed them, and indeed you have appointed Allah your surety. Verily! Allah knows what

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[349] Surat Al-Baqarah: 27

you do'.[350]

Abdullah bin Amr bin Al-As (RAm) has reported that Allah's Messenger (SAW) said:

"Four are the qualities which, if found in a person, make him a sheer hypocrite; and one who possesses one of them, possesses one characteristic of hypocrisy till he abandons it. These are: When he is entrusted with something, he betrays that trust; when he talks he lies, when he makes a covenant, he acts deceitfully and when he falls out, he reviles".[351]

Every oath taken, or covenant made, or a vow undertaken, is a Covenant before Allah, and should be faithfully conformed to, respected and fulfilled.

O Allah! Grant us enough of what You make lawful so that we may dispense with what You make unlawful. We seek refuge in You from dishonesty and deceitfulness.

1.26. Awarding honour to elderly people and showing kindness to children

The fact that treating old people with respect and showing sympathy to children is a part of Faith

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[350] Surat Al-Nahl: 91

[351] Al-Bukhari

has been pointed out in Allah's words and in a number of the sayings of the Prophet's (SAW). Amr bin Shuaib (RA) reported on the authority of his father that the Messenger of Allah (SAW) said:

"He who shows no mercy to younger ones and does not acknowledge the honour due to our older ones, is not of us".[352]

The reward of noble behaviour towards elderly people has been confirmed in the Hadeeth narrated by Anas bin Malik (RA), Allah's Messenger (SAW) said:

"If a young man honours an older person on account of his age, Allah appoints someone to show reverence to him in his old age".[353]

Respecting elders and preferring them to others has also been emphasised when appointing Imam (one who leads As-Salah). This is signified in the Hadeeth reported by Abu Mas'ud Uqbah bin Amr Al-Badri Al-Ansari (RA), Allah's Messenger (SAW) said:

"The person who is best versed in the recitation of the Book of Allah, should lead the prayer, but if all those present are equally versed in it, then the one who has most

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[352] At-Tirmidhi and Abu Dawud

[353] At-Tirmidhi

knowledge of the Sunnah; if they are equal in that respect too, then the one who has emigrated (to Al-Madinah) first, if they are equal in this respect too, then the oldest of them should lead the prayer".[354]

The eldest people should have preference over others in every matter, except in cases where a younger one exceeds them in some values. That is why we have been asked to treat people according to their real status. Allah's Messenger (SAW) has asked us to let the eldest speak first in a gathering provided all the persons present there are equal in virtue and intelligence. Narrated Abu Musa (RA), Allah's Messenger (SAW) said:

"It is out of reverence to Allah in respecting an aged Muslim".[355]

We are commanded not to abuse old people. We should speak good to them and help them. It has been narrated on the authority of Maimun bin Abi Shabib (RA), a person asked Aisha (RA) for charity and she gave him a piece of bread. Thereafter one well dressed person asked her for charity and she invited him to sit down and served him food. When asked the reason for the difference, she said: The Messenger of Allah (SAW) directed us to entertain people according

[354] Muslim

[355] Abu Dawud

according to their status.[356] We should not show any type of impertinence towards elderly people. Abu Sa'id Samura bin Jundub (RA) narrated: "I was a boy during the time of the Messenger of Allah (SAW) and used to preserve in my memory what he said, but I do not narrate what I preserved because we have among us people older than myself".[357]

On the same principle, it is essential for the old to be merciful to children, kiss them and show compassion to youngsters. This is considered as a righteous deed in Islam. Narrated Aisha (RA), A bedouin came to the Prophet (SAW) and said: "You (people) kiss the boys! We don't kiss them". The Prophet (SAW) said:
"I cannot put mercy in your heart after Allah has taken it away from it".[358]

Showing kind-heartedness and mercy to children was practised by the Prophet (SAW). Narrated Usama bin Zaid (RA), Allah Messenger (SAW) used to put me on (one of) his thighs and put Al-Hasan bin Ali on his other thigh, and them embrace us and say: *"O Allah! Please be Merciful to them, as I am merciful to them".*[359]

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356 Abu Dawud

357 Al-Bukhari and Muslim

358 Al-Bukhari

359 Al-Bukhari

Similarly, we are informed that greeting children is recommended. Narrated Anas bin Malik (RA), he passed by a group of boys and greeted then and said: "The Prophet (SAW) used to do so".[360]

Thus, it can be understood that awarding honour and respect to elderly people and kindness to children is a part of Allah's Mercy, which He divided into one hundred parts. He Subhanahu Wa-Ta'ala kept ninety-nine parts with Him and sent down one part on the earth, and because of that, one single part, His creatures are merciful to each other. This is why in the Hadeeth narrated by Jarir bin Abdullah Al-Bajali (RA) the Prophet (SAW) said: *"He who is not merciful to others, will not be treated mercifully"*.[361]

1.27. Humbleness and rendering arrogance

Indeed humbleness is honour and arrogance or pride is a deadly illness. Taking pride in ourselves due to the money we have or the knowledge we possess is the act of the devil who beautifies these worldly benefits to us. Humbleness always brings forth fruits of Faith whereas pride always leads to destruction for Allah does not love any arrogant boaster. For this reason, arrogance and self-conceit have been condemned by Allah:

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[360] Al-Bukhari

[361] Al-Bukhari

'That home of the Hereafter (i.e. Paradise), We shall assign to those who rebel not against the truth with pride and oppression in the land nor do mischief by committing crimes. And the good end is for the Muttaqûn (the pious)'.[362]

Similarly Allah's Messenger (SAW) has damned the person who is arrogant and stated that he/she will be of the people of Hell-Fire. This is indicated in the Hadeeth narrated by Harithah bin Wahb (RA): I heard the Prophet (SAW) say: *"May I tell you of the people of Paradise? Every weak and poor obscure person whom the people look down upon but if he takes an oath to do something, his oath is fulfilled by Allah. And may I inform you of the people of the Hell-Fire? They are all those violent, arrogant and the stubborn people".*[363]

We have been commanded to practice humbleness and never turn our faces away from people with pride. This is indicated in Allah's words:

'And turn not your face away from men with pride, nor walk in insolence through the earth. Verily, Allah likes not each arrogant boaster'.[364]

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362 Surat Al-Qasas: 83

363 Al-Bukhari

364 Surat Luqman: 18

Narrated Abdullah bin Masud (RA), Allah's Messenger (SAW) said:

"Whosoever has pride in his heart equal to the weight of an atom (or a small ant) shall not enter Paradise". A person (amongst the audience) said, 'Verily a person loves that his dress should be beautiful, and his shoes should be beautiful'. The Prophet (SAW) remarked: *"Verily, Allah is the Most Beautiful and He loves beauty. Pride is to completely disregard the truth, and to scorn (to look down upon) the people".*[365]

It has been reported that Umar (RA) said: "O people! Show humbleness for I have heard the Prophet (SAW) saying:

"Whoever shows humbleness for the sake of Allah, Allah elevates him such, that although he thinks himself as worthless, in the eyes of the people. Whosoever shows pride then Allah degrades him such that in the eyes of the people he is in a worst position".[366]

Allah has commanded His Messenger (SAW) to be kind and humble to the believers. He says:

'And be kind and humble to the believers who follow you'.[367]

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[365] Muslim

[366] Muslim

[367] Surat Ash-Shura: 215

We are directed to treat each other humbly and never look down on anybody. Allah increases the honour and dignity of one who forgives; and one who serves another seeking His Pleasure. It has been reported that Ayyad bin Himar (RA) said that Allah's Messenger (SAW) said:

"Allah has revealed to me that you should be humble to one another so that one should neither hold himself above another nor show high-handedness to another"[368]

Our Prophet Muhammad (SAW) was so humble that he used to do his housework, go to the market, buy what he needed and carry it home. He used to walk alone at night and think of his people, helping them and looking after the needy alone. Al-Aswad bin Yazid (RA) reported that Aisha (RA) was asked: What did the Messenger of Allah (SAW) do inside his house? She answered: "He used to keep himself busy serving his family, and when it was the time for prayer, he would get up for prayer".[369] Similarly, the unique humbleness of the Prophet (SAW) was shown when he used to take hold of the hand of all kinds of people, the young or old, rich or poor. A believer, therefore, is under obligation to practice humbleness in his house by respecting his family and and being kind to his children and to all people. A true

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[368] Muslim

[369] Al-Bukhari

Muslim should not feel insult or indignity by assisting his wife in doing home-based affairs as the Prophet (SAW) used to do. Deviation from the practice of the Prophet (SAW) is an indication of arrogance, which is enough to sustain the anger of Allah.

Allah has promised to give the Home of the Hereafter to those who are not arrogant and intend not mischief on earth. This is signified in the words of Allah:

'That home of the Hereafter (i.e. Paradise), We shall assign to those who rebel not against the truth with pride and oppression in the land nor do mischief by committing crimes. And the good end is for the Muttaqûn (the pious)'.[370]

On the other hand, He will not look at him who trails his lower garment out of pride. He will be deprived from Allah's Grace. Abu Hurairah (RA) has reported that Allah's Messenger (SAW) said: *"There are three types of persons to whom Allah will not speak on the Day of Resurrection nor will He purify them or look at them and they will have a painful punishment. These are an aged man who commits adultery, a ruler who is a great liar and a proud beggar".*[371]

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[370] Surat Al-Qasas: 83

[371] Muslim

It has also been reported by Jabir (RA), Allah's Messenger (SAW) said:

"The dearest and nearest among you to me on the Day of Resurrection will be one who is the best of you in conduct; and the most hateful among you to me and the farthest of you from me will be (Athartharun) the vain talkative and (Almutashadiqun) the proud. The companions submitted: 'O Messenger of Allah! We have come to know who are the self-centred and vain talkative but who are the (mutafiyhiqun)? He replied: The arrogant".[372]

From all considerations, however, arrogance is considered an evil act, which is detestable. We have been told that honour; greatness and pride are Divine Attributes. They belong only to Allah alone. We are warned against claiming to ourselves any of these Divine Attributes. This is signified in the Hadeeth narrated by Abu Hurairah (RA), Allah's Messenger (SAW) said:
"Allah, the Exalted, says: **'Honour is My Izar (garment) and Pride is My Cloak. Whoever vies with Me regarding one of them, shall be punished'"**.[373]

May Allah the Almighty help us to observe modesty and humility and give us the ability and understanding to practice this.

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372 At-Tirmidhi

373 Muslim

1.28. Abstention from Envy, spying, backbiting, suspicion and false testimony

It has been mentioned in the Noble Qur'an and in the Sunnah of the Prophet (SAW) that: envy, backbiting, or jealousy and mutual estrangement are forbidden. All scandal or slander of all kinds is condemned. Allah and His Messenger (SAW) warn us against such very bad qualities, which go along with unbelief. In this respect Allah said:

'O you who believe! Avoid much suspicions, indeed some suspicions are sins. And spy not, neither backbite one another. Would one of you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother? You would hate it (so hate backbiting). And fear Allah. Verily, Allah is the One Who accepts repentance, Most Merciful'. [374]

Most Kinds of suspicions are unjustified and should be avoided. In some cases suspicion is considered as a sin and some are crimes in themselves; for they cause injustice to innocent people. Narrated Abu Hurairah (RA), Allah's Messenger (SAW) said:

"Beware of suspicion, for suspicion is the worst of false tales; and do not look for other faults".[375]

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[374] Surat Al-Hujurat: 12

[375] Al-Bukhari

We have been commanded to verify all reports and news if emanating from persons in particular those we do not know lest we should harm people unknowingly. This is indicated in Allah's words:

'O you who believe! If a rebellious evil person comes to you with news, verify it, lest you harm people in ignorance, and afterwards you become regretful to what you have done'.[376]

Allah has commanded us to seek refuge with Him from the evil of the envier when he envies. We have been commanded not to envy people of what Allah has provided them with. Allah has stated:

'Or do they envy men (Muhammad (SAW) his followers) for what Allah has given them of His Bounty? Then We had already given the family of Ibrâhim (Abraham) the Book and Al-Hikmah (As-Sunnah - Divine Inspiration to those Prophets not written in the form of a book), and conferred upon them a great kingdom'.[377]

Narrated Anas bin Malik (RA), Allah's Messenger (SAW) said: *"Do not hate one another, and do not be jealous of one another, and do not desert each other, and*

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[376] Surat Al-Hujurat: 6

[377] Surat An-Nisa: 54

O Allah's worshippers! Be brothers. Lo! It is not permissible for any Muslim to desert his brother for more than three days".[378]

We have been ordered to avoid envy because it consumes virtues just as fire consumes fuel. However, envy is allowed only for two things. Narrated Abu Hurairah (RA), Allah's Messenger (SAW) said:

"Not to wish to be the like of except two men: A man whom Allah has taught the Qur'an and he recites it during some hours of the night and during some hours of the day, and his neighbour listens to him and says, 'I wish I had been given what has been given to so-and-so, so that I might do what he does'. And a man whom Allah has given wealth and he spends it (according to what Allah has ordained) in a just and right manner, whereupon another man may say, 'I wish I had been given what so-and-so has been given, for then I would do what he does'".[379]

It is forbidden to convey disagreeable, false information from one person to another with the intention of causing harm and enmity between them. This is signified in Allah's words:

'A slanderer, going about with calumnies'.[380]

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[378] Al-Bukhari

[379] Al-Bukhari

[380] Surat Nun: 11

Narrated Hudhaifah (RA), Allah's Messenger (SAW) said:

"The person who goes about with calumnies will never enter Paradise".[381]

This Hadeeth clearly shows that a person, who practices calumny to create conflict among people despite the fact that he knows it is forbidden, will never go to Paradise. In the same way we are asked to refrain from hurting people's feelings when they are present; how much worse is it when we say things, true or false when they are absent. Allah said:

'And spy not, neither backbite one another. Would one of you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother?'.[382]

The prohibition of backbiting has also been illustrated in the sayings of the Prophet (SAW). Narrated Anas (RA), Allah's Messenger (SAW) said:

"During the night of ascension, I saw a group of people who were scratching their chests and faces with copper nails. I asked 'Who are these people, O Jibril?' Jibril replied: 'These are the people who ate the flesh of others (by back

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[381] Al-Bukhari and Muslim

[382] Surat Al-Hujurat: 12

biting) and trampled people's honour".[383]

It is evident that backbiting should be strictly avoided. This Hadeeth makes it clear that a Muslim should not attack another Muslim's honour. We also learn from this Hadeeth that falsehood, slandering and backbiting are major sins because they cause conflict and disagreement in the community. It is also forbidden for us to listen to backbiting. This is signified in the words of Allah:

'And when you (Muhammad (SAW)) see those who engage in a false conversation about Our Ayats (of the Qur'an) by mocking at them, stay away from them till they turn to another topic. And if Shaitân (Satan) causes you to forget, then after the remembrance sit not you in the company of those people who are the Zâlimûn (polytheists and wrong-doers, etc.)'.[384]

We are commanded to withdraw from hearing evil vain talk. It is our duty to defend the honour of a Muslim if someone says somethingdisgraceful against him. Narrated Abud-Darda (RA), the Prophet (SAW) said: *"He who defends the honour of his (Muslim) brother, Allah will secure his face against the*

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383 Abu Dawud

384 Surat Al-Ana'm: 68

Fire on the Day of Judgement".[385]

In some specific cases, it is permissible to mention the true facts, virtues and vices without ambiguity. This can be done for valid reasons approved by Islamic Shari'ah. For instance: it is permissible for an oppressed person to speak before the judge about someone (so-and-so wronged me and has done such and such to me) to establish his/her rights. Similarly, seeking assistance from somebody to change one's immoral behaviour.

Aishah (RA) reported: "a man sought permission for audience with the Prophet (SAW). The Prophet (SAW) said: *"Give him permission but he is a bad member of his tribe"*. It is also reported by Fatimah bint Qais (RA), 'I came to the Prophet (SAW) and said to him: "Muawiyah and Abul-Jahm sent me a proposal of marriage." The Messenger of Allah said: *"Muawiyah is destitute and he has no property, and Abul-Jahm is very hard on women"*.[386]

To give false testimony is prohibited. This is indicated in Allah's words:
'And shun lying speech (false statements)'.[387]

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[385] At-Tirmidhi

[386] Al-Bukhari and Muslim). For more information about permissible cases see Riyad Us-Saliheen: Volume two.

[387] Surat Al-Hajj: 30

The Prophet (SAW) has also condemned it. Narrated Abu Bakra (RA), Allah's Messenger (SAW) said:

"Shall I inform you of one of the greatest of the cardinal sins?" We said: 'Yes, O Messenger of Allah!' He said: "To join others as partners with Allah in worship and to be undutiful to one's parents". Allah's Messenger sat up from his reclining position and added "I warn you against making a false statement and giving a false testimony". The Messenger of Allah kept on repeating this (warning) till we wished he should stop".[388]

People who pass their lives in selfishness, greed, slander, gossip and other bad qualities would feel that they are surrounded by darkness in their souls during this life and on the Last Day they may end up in the Hell-Fire. Those who spend their lives in causing troubles to other, in backbiting, lies and hypocrisy will one day lose all that they have worked for; their entire lives have been wasted and it will be too late to do anything about it. In this context Allah said:

'As in the case of those before you: they were mightier than you in power, and more flourishing in wealth and children. They had their enjoyment of their portion: and you have of yours, as did those before you; and you

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[388] Al-Bukhari and Muslim

indulge in idle talk as they did. Such are they whose deeds are in vain in this world and in the Hereafter. Such are they who are the losers'.[389]

Moral values and manners should be pragmatic by all members of the Muslim community. Manners spring from morals; and mutual respect and confidence are a duty and a privilege in Islam. O Allah! We seek refuge in You from the evils of our hearings, the evil of our seeing, the evils of our tongues; and the evils of our hearts.

1.29. Abstention from Hatred and Enmity

In Islam it is prohibited to show any type of hatred or enmity to people, in particular Muslim brothers. As a part of Faith, Allah has commanded us to love each other and forbids for us division and hatred. It is Him who united us and joined our hearts together. Allah said:

'And hold fast, all of you together, to the Rope of Allah (i.e. this Qur'an), and be not divided among yourselves and remember Allah's Favour on you, for you were enemies one to another but He joined your hearts together, so that, by His Grace, you became brethren (in Islamic Faith), and you were on the brink of

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[389] Surat At-Taubah: 79

a pit of Fire, and He saved you from it. Thus Allah makes His Ayât (proofs, evidences, Ayats, lessons, signs, revelations, etc.,) clear to you, that you may be guided'.[390]

Anas Ibn Malik (RA) narrated that the Prophet (SAW) said:

"None of you truly believes in Islam until he loves for his brother what he loves for himself"[391]

On the authority of Abu Hurairah (RA), Allah's Messenger (SAW) said:

"Do not envy one another; do not inflate prices one to another; do not hate one another; do not turn away from one another, do not undercut one another, but be, O Allah's slaves, brothers. A Muslim is the brother of a Muslim: neither he oppresses him nor does he fail him, neither he lies to him nor does he hold him in disrespect. Piety is right here (and he pointed to his breast three times). It is evil enough for a man to hold his brother Muslim in hatred. It is absolutely a sin for a Muslim to kill another Muslim, or to take his property, or to destroy his honour".[392]

The above saying of the Prophet (SAW) clearly

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[390] Surat Al-Imran: 103

[391] Al-Bukhari and Muslim

[392] Muslim

shows that a Muslim should never oppress his Muslim brother nor forsake him.

The greatest social value of Islam is the implementation of the Muslim brotherhood and Faith cannot be truly realised until this spiritual principle is accomplished. That is why it is prohibited to laugh at people in contempt or ridicule. It is forbidden to defame or be sarcastic to each other. This is signified in Allah's words:

'O you who believe! Let not a group scoff at another group, it may be that the latter are better than the former; nor let (some) women scoff at other women, it may be that the latter are better than the former, nor defame one another, nor insult one another by nicknames. How bad is it, to insult one's brother after having Faith [i.e. to call your Muslim brother (a faithful believer) as: "O sinner", or "O wicked", etc.]. And whosoever does not repent, then such are indeed Zâlimûn (wrongdoers, etc.)'.[393]

It is the act of Shaytan (Satan) who tries to encite enmity and hatred between the one and the other. We are warned against following the footsteps of Shaytan who is our enemy. This is signified in Allah's words:

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[393] Surat Al-Hujurat: 11

'O you who believe! Follow not the footsteps of Shaitân (Satan). And whosoever follows the footsteps of Shaitân (Satan), then, verily he commands what is shameful and wrong'.[394]

Instead, we should obey the commands of Allah and His Messenger (SAW). We are asked to be wary of the Shaytan's plans. Therefore, we should never show any kind of enmity to each other, on the contrary we should love one another and try to fulfil the needs of each other. Narrated Abu Ayub Al-Ansari (RA), Allah's Messenger (SAW) said:

"It is not lawful for a man to desert his Muslim brother for more than three nights".[395]

Hatred and spite are not constructive contributions to the work of this world, but its opposites. Indulgence in hatred means the cutting off of all hopes of this life and the Hereafter. We ask Allah to fill our hearts with love and help us to respect all our brothers.

1.30. Refraining from Self-Praise, Self-Sanctity

We as Muslims have been commanded to worship Allah offering Him sincere devotion. It is

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[394] Surat An-Nur: 21

[395] Al-Bukhari

necessary to bear in mind that the acceptance of any righteous deed depends on if it is totally performed for Allah's sake without any showing off or gaining praise or fame. Self-praise or self-sanctity is a disease that Allah hates and condemns. As Allah knows our inmost being, it is absurd for us to justify ourselves either by pretending that we are better than we are or by finding excuses for our conduct. We must offer ourselves unreservedly such as we are: it is His Mercy and Grace that will purify us. He Subhanahu Wa-Ta'ala said:

'Have you not seen those who claim sanctity for themselves. Nay - but Allah sanctifies whom He pleases, and they will not be dealt with injustice even equal to the extent of a Fatilâ (A scalish thread in the long slit of a date-stone)'.[395]

The self-sanctified people are the farthest from sanctity or purity, which can only proceed from Allah. They cannot play with Allah's Truth and yet go on claiming to be purified or justified by Allah. Their falsehood in itself condemns them: no further proof is needed of their selfishness and evil. Allah said:

'So ascribe not purity to yourselves. He knows best him who fears and keeps his duty to

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[395] Surat An-Nisa: 49

Him'.[396]

Abu Hurairah (RA) reported that Allah's Messenger (SAW) said:

"The first to be judged in the Day of Resurrection will be a man who has died as a martyr. He will be brought forward, and after Allah has reminded him of the favours; He has bestowed upon him and the man acknowledges them, He will ask: What did you do to express gratitude for this? The man will reply: I fought in Your Cause till I was martyred. Allah will say: You tell a lie. You fought so that people might call you courageous; and they have done so. Command will then be issued about him and he will be dragged on his face and thrown into Hell. Next a man who has acquired and imparted knowledge and read the Qur'an will be brought forward and after Allah has reminded him of the favours and the man acknowledges them, He will ask: What did you do to express gratitude for this? The man will reply: I acquired and taught knowledge and read the Qur'an for Your Sake. Allah will say: You tell a lie. You acquired knowledge so that people might call you learned, and you read the Qur'an that they might call you reciter and they have done so. Command will then be issued about him and he will be dragged on his face and thrown into Hell. Next a man whom Allah has given plenty of wealth, will be brought forward and after Allah has reminded him of the favours He bestowed upon him and the man acknowledges, He will ask: What did you do

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[396] Surat An-Najim: 32

to express gratitude for this? The man will reply: I have not neglected to spend generously for Your Sake to all the causes approved by You. Allah will say: You tell a lie. You did it so that people might call you generous, and they have done so. Command will then be issued about him and he will be dragged on his face and thrown into Hell".[397]

This authentic saying clearly illustrates the dangers of performing acts for showing off or for a person to be praised. Though the deeds, which are performed by these people, are righteous, they are not accepted because they are not enacted to please Allah. Narrated Abu Sa'id (RA): I heard the Prophet Messenger (SAW) saying:

"Allah will lay bare His Shin and then all the believers, men and women, will prostrate themselves before Him; but there will remain those who used to prostrate themselves in the world for showing off and for gaining good reputation. Such a one will try to prostrate himself (on the Day of Judgement) but his back bones will become a single (so he will not be able to prostate)".[398]

O Allah! We ask you for forgiveness and security in our religion and in our worldly affairs. O Allah! Grant us the sense of piety and purify our souls as You are the Best to purify them.

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[397] Muslim

[398] Al-Bukhari

1.31. Refraining from Anger and practising Tolerance

The fact that abstaining from anger and exercising tolerance is a part of Faith has been indicated in Allah's words and the Hadeeth of the Prophet (SAW). Allah said:

'And the slaves of the Most Beneficent (Allah) are those who walk on the earth in humility and sedateness, and when the foolish address them (with bad words) they reply back with mild words of gentleness'.[399]

When we are addressed with bad words, we are commanded to ignore, turn away or to treat the matter as if it did not affect us. Our Prophet (SAW) was directed by Allah to forgive insults and persecution and to pay no attention to ignorant fools. This is indicated in Allah's words:

'Show forgiveness, enjoin what is good, and turn away from the foolish (i.e. don't punish them)'.[400]

As people of Faith we should not let the actions and feelings of a few prejudice our emotions against innocent people. We are told to be patient

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[399] Surat Al-Furqan: 63

[400] Surat Al-A'raf: 199

and forgiving against envy, unfairness and injuries. This is signified in Allah's words:

'Many of the people of the Book wish that if they could turn you away as disbelievers after you have believed, out of envy from their own-selves, even, after the truth has become manifest unto them. But forgive and overlook, till Allah brings His Command. Verily, Allah is Able to do all things'.[401]

Narrated Abu Hurairah (RA), a man asked the Prophet (SAW) to give him an advice and he said: *"Do not be angry"*. The man repeated that several times and the Prophet (SAW) replied: *"Do not be angry"*.[402]

Ibn Abbas (RAm) narrated that a man came into the presence of Umar bin Al-Khatab (RA) addressing him saying: 'O Son of Khatab, you neither bestow much on us nor deal with us justly. Umar became cross and was about to indulge in violence when a Sahabi who was there said: 'O Leader of the Faithful, Allah said to His Prophet (SAW): **"Keep to forgiveness (O' Muhammad (SAW)) and enjoin kindness and turn away from the ignorant".**[403]

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[401] Surat Al-Baqarah: 109

[402] Al-Bukhari

[403] Surat Al-Araf: 199

This is one of the ignorant'. When the Sahabi said this, Umar became quite motionless in his seat. He always acted strictly upon the book of Allah'.[404]

Abu Hurairah (RA) narrated: Allah's Messenger (SAW) said:

"The strong man is not one who wrestles but the strong man is one who controls himself from a fit of rage".[405]

It has been mentioned that the most hated person to Allah is the one who is most quarrelsome to his opponents. This type of man has a smooth tongue and appears to be worldly-wise, though you may not realise his frauds. Behind your back he is a cruel enemy. He stirs up quarrels and causes all sorts of mischief in the community. This type of man will never win Allah's love, and we are warned against his tricks. Allah said:

'And of mankind there is he whose speech may please you (O Muhammad (SAW)), in this worldly life, and he calls Allah to witness as to that which is in his heart, yet he is the most quarrelsome of the opponents'.[406]

That is why we have been commanded to refrain

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[404] Al-Bukhari

[405] Al-Bukhari and Muslim

[406] Surat Al-Baqarah: 204

from disputes and arguments even if we are on the truth. Narrated Abu Umamah (RA), Allah's Messenger (SAW) said:

"I guarantee a home in Paradise for a person who gives up arguments and disputes even if he is on the truth; and I also guarantee a home in the middle of Paradise for a person who gives up lying even while joking; and I also guarantee a home in the highest part of Paradise for a person who has a highest standard of character".[407]

It has been indicated in Allah's Law that in any case the compensation for a damage is an equal redress i.e. a harm should be correspondent to the harm done to you. However we have been commanded that the best moral means would be to tolerate and to turn enmity and hatred into friendship by love and forgiveness. This is signified in Allah's words:

'The recompense for an evil is an evil like thereof, but whoever forgives and makes reconciliation, his reward is due from Allah. Verily, He likes not the Zâlimûn (oppressors, wrong-doers, etc.)'.[408]

Our Lord! Lay not on us a burden greater than we have strength to bear. Our Lord! Grant us

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[407] Abu Dawud, At-At-Tirmidhi and Ibn Majah

[408] Surat As-Shura: 40

forgiveness and have mercy on us. Our Lord! We seek refuge in You from undesirable manners, deeds and aspirations.

1.32. Practising Truthfulness against Falsehood

A number of virtues have been discussed, but love and practice of truthfulness, in thought and intention, words and actions are emphasised here. The chief stress is laid on the fact that truthfulness leads to righteousness and falsehood leads wickedness and then to Hell-Fire. Truthfulness as a part of Faith is as necessary to men as it is to women. Allah said:

'O you who believe! Be afraid of Allah, and be with those who are true (in words and deeds)'.[409]

Abdullah bin Umar (RAm) narrated: the Prophet (SAW) said:
"Truthfulness leads to Al-Birr (righteousness) and Al-Birr leads to Paradise. And a man keeps on telling the truth until he becomes a truthful person. Falsehood leads to Al-Fujur (i.e. wickedness - evil-doing), and Al-Fujur leads to the Hell Fire, and a man keeps on telling lies until he is written before Allah, a liar".[410]

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[409] Surat At-Tauba: 119

[410] Al-Bukhari

Practising truthfulness and avoiding falsehood constitutes the magnificent set of Faith. This is indicated in Allah's words:

'And those who believe in (the Oneness of) Allah and His Messengers, they are the Siddiqûn (the truthful), and the martyrs with their Lord, they shall have their reward and their light'.[411]

We have been told that Allah does not like a man who tells lies. Such a man is bound to be found out. This is signified in Allah's words:

'Verily, Allah guides not one who transgresses and lies'.[412]

The truthful will be accepted as members of a great company in the Hereafter. It is a company, which lives eternally in the light of Allah's Grace. The highest is that of the Prophets, the next is those who are truthful: they love and support the truth with whatever they possess. Those who testify to the truth even against themselves. Allah said:

'And whosoever obeys Allah and the Messenger (Muhammad (SAW)), then they will be in the company of those on whom

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411 Surat Al-Hadid: 19

412 Surat Ghafir: 28

Allah has bestowed His Grace, of the Prophets, the Siddiqûn (the truthful), the martyrs, and the righteous. And how excellent these companions are!'.[413]

Happiness, tranquillity, honour and salvation can be achieved through truthfulness, but falsehood is deceitfulness and always leads to destruction and disgrace. No good can spring out of falsehood. Truthfulness is a source of every good deed and falsehood is a source of evil. This is signified in the Hadeeth narrated by Hasan bin Ali (RAHM): 'I remember these words from Allah's Messenger (SAW):

'Give up what is doubtful to you for that which is not doubtful; for truthfulness is peace of mind and falsehood is doubt'.[414]

All we are told about the characteristics of Allah's Prophets and Messengers is that they are men of truthfulness and sincerity. They were honoured among their people due to such quality. It is indeed truthfulness, which raised them to a high position. They kept to truth and piety in the highest place. Abu Sufyan (RA) reported as a portion of his detailed statement about Hiraclius when the latter questioned him about the teachings of the

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413 Surat An-Nisa: 69

414 At-Tirmidhi

Prophet (SAW). He said:

'Worship Allah alone and do not associate anything with Him and give up all that your ancestors said; and he commands us to be truthful, modest, and to strengthen the ties of kinship'.[415]

O Allah! We ask You for security in this world and in the Hereafter. O Allah! Make us from those who are humble who accept Faith and do good deeds. O Allah! Accept us with those on whom You bestowed Your grace.

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415 Al-Bukhari

2. Declaration by the Tongue

2.1. Statement of Al-Kalima Ataibah 'La Ilaha illa Allah, Muhammad (SAW) Rasul Allah'
(None has the right to be worshipped except Allah and Muhammad (SAW) is the Messenger of Allah)

The first part of this Holy Kalimah points out the Unity of Allah which includes the phrase that 'La Ilaha' (There is no true god) negates anything or anyone that is being worshipped other than Allah, and the phrase: 'illa Allah' (except Allah) which confirms that all forms of worship, submission and adoration must be for Allah alone without setting up rivals with Him. The second part of it affirms the Prophethood of Muhammad (SAW). This attestation is known as the Shahadah: Ashhadu An La Ilaha Illa Allah Wahdahu La Sharika Lahu, Wa Ashhadu An Muhammad (SAW) Abduhu wa Rasulahu. (I testify that there is none has the right to be worshipped but Allah Alone and He has no partners, and I testify that Muhammad (SAW) is His Slave and His Messenger). Anyone who sincerely desires to enter the fold of Islam must recite it as a declaration of his Faith. To put our Faith in words like this is to make a firm commitment to surrender to the will of Allah and to follow His Way in our daily life as shown by the Prophet Muhammad (SAW).

The conditions to fulfil the Holy Kalimah *'La Ilaha illa Allah, Muhammad (SAW) Rasul Allah'* (None has the right to be worshipped but Allah Alone and Muhammad (SAW) is the Messenger of Allah) are:

- Sincerity, honesty, love and attachment to the declaration of *La Ilaha illa Allah, Muhammad (SAW) Rasul Allah.*
- It is essential that the limbs and all other parts and organs of one's body testify to it and act in accordance to it. This is very important as regards it's meaning (i.e. the meaning of *'La Ilaha illa Allah, Muhammad (SAW) Rasul Allah'*).
- Knowledge about what it means.
- Certainty about its meaning which dispels doubts and suspicions.
- Conveying it to others.

It is noticed that most of the Muslims do not understand the reality of the meaning of the first fundamental principle of Islam (i.e. *La Ilaha illa Allah, Muhammad (SAW) Rasul Allah*) and its significance. Therefore, it is essential to highlight something of the aspects included in the meanings of this Holy principle in some detail:

1. A Muslim must confess that Allah is the only Lord for all the uniAyat, the Creator of the heavens and the earth, the Ruler of all that exists, the Lord of mankind and the King of mankind. His

being is absolute being. It is He Who gives life and death, and He (Allah Alone) is the Giver of security, the Sustainer, the Provider, and the self-sufficient Master, Whom all creatures need. He is the One Who gives all things the power to grow, to move and to change.

Associating partners with Allah i.e. putting up Allah's creatures in rivalry against Him is an unforgivable sin. This is rebellion against the real meaning and basis of religious life. Allah the Most Mighty and Honoured said:

'Verily, Allah forgives not that partners should be set up with Him in worship, but He forgives except that (anything else) to whom He pleases, and whosoever sets up partners with Allah in worship, he has indeed invented a tremendous sin'.[416]

The one who associates rivals with Allah and dies with this belief will not be forgiven and Paradise is forbidden to him and the Hell-Fire will be his abode. This is signified in Allah's words:

'Verily, whosoever sets up partners in worship with Allah, then Allah has forbidden Paradise for him and the Fire will be his abode'.[417]

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[416] Surat An-Nisa: 48

[417] Surat Al-Ma'idah 72

2. A Muslim must confess that none has the right to be worshipped but Allah alone. All kinds of worship (e.g., praying, fasting, pilgrimage, invoking, slaughtering sacrifices, giving charity, swearing, etc.) are meant for Allah alone and none else. So pray to none but Allah, swear by none but Allah, offer an animal as sacrifice to none but Allah, ... etc. And that means - all that Allah and His Messenger (SAW) order you to do, either in the Qur'an or in the Sunnah you must do, and all that Allah and His Messenger (SAW) forbid you, you must not do. It is necessary to bear in mind that the acceptance of righteous deeds is stipulated with the following two basic conditions, which must be fulfilled:

- The intention while doing such deeds must be totally for Allah's sake only without any showing off or gaining praise or fame, etc.
- Such a deed must be performed in accordance with the Sunnah of Allah's Messenger Muhammad (SAW).

3. A Muslim must confess that all the best of names and the most perfect qualities with which Allah has named or qualified Himself with in His Book (the Qur'an) or as the Messenger of Allah, Muhammad (SAW) has named or qualified Him are for Allah without changing them or neglecting them or twisting the meanings or giving resemblance to any of the created things. As Allah said:

'There is nothing like unto Him and He is the All-Hearer, the All -Seer'.[418]

This Holy Ayat confirms the quality of hearing and the quality of sight for Allah without resemblance to others. This is the Faith of all true believers and was the Faith of all the Prophets of Allah from Noah to the last of the Prophets, Muhammad (SAW) . Thus:

- A Muslim must not name or qualify Allah except with what He or His Messenger (SAW) has named or qualified Him.
- None can be named or qualified with the names or qualifications of Allah; e.g. Al-Rahman (most Gracious), Al-Rahim (most Merciful) or Al-Aziz Al-Hakim (the Exalted in Might, the Wise), etc. It is prohibited to use Allah's names defiantly, or so as to suggest anything offensive to His Unity. This is indicated in Allah's words:

'And (All) the Most Beautiful Names belong to Allah, so call on Him by them, and leave the company of those who belie or deny (or utter impious speech against) His Names. They will be requited for what they used to do'.[419]

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418 Surat Ash-Shura: 11

419 Surat Al-Araf: 180

These names and attributes form our fundamental conception of Allah. Remembering them in our prayers and praise is a part of Faith. Narrated Abu Hurairah (RA): *'Allah has ninety-nine Names, and whoever believes in their meanings and acts accordingly, will enter Paradise; and Allah is Witr (one) and loves al-Witr'.*[420]

- A Muslim must believe in the Kursi and in the Arsh (Throne) and that Allah the Most Beneficent Istawa (rose over) His Arsh (Throne) over the seventh heaven in a manner that suits His Majesty. As Allah said:

'The Most Beneficent (Allah) Istawa (rose over) the (Mighty) Throne'.[421]

Our Prophet Muhammad (SAW) informed us that the Kursi compared to the Arsh (Throne) is nothing but like a ring thrown out upon open space of the desert. Allah is with us with His knowledge and His Power. He sees and hears all that we do or utter. His Knowledge extends to everything seen and unseen, present and future, near and far. This is signified in the words of Allah:

'He is Allah, than Whom there is Lâ ilaha illa

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[420] Al-Bukhari

[421] Surat Ta-Ha: 5

Huwa (none has the right to be worshipped but He) the All-Knower of the unseen and the seen (open). He is the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful'.[422]

When Allah the Most High ordered Moses and his brother Aaron (Alaihimus-Salaam) to go to Pharaoh (Ruler of Egypt) and to speak to him about Allah's Ayat (proofs, evidences, signs, Ayats, etc.). Moses and Aaron expressed their fear from the punishment or the transgression of Pharaoh. Allah the Most Beneficent replied:

'He (Allah) said: 'Fear not, Verily! I am with you both, Hearing and Seeing'.[423]

- Each Muslim must confess that none has the right to be followed after Allah, but the Prophet Muhammad (SAW). This is indicated in the words of Allah:

'And whatsoever the Messenger (Muhammad (SAW)) gives you, take it and whatsoever he forbids you, abstain from it'.[424]

As for others besides the Prophet (Muhammad

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[422] Surat Al-Hashr: 22

[423] Surat Ta-Ha: 45

[424] Surat Al-Hashr: 7

(SAW)), their statements are to be taken or rejected as to whether these are in accordance with Allah's Book (i.e. the Holy Qur'an) or with the Sunnah of the Prophet (SAW).

Each Muslim must confess that Muhammad (SAW) is the last (final) of All the Prophets and the Messengers This is signified in Allah's words:

'Muhammad (SAW) is not the father of any man among you, but he is the Messenger of Allah and the last (end) of the Prophets. And Allah is Ever All Aware of everything'.[425]

He (SAW) was sent as a mercy for all creatures i.e. to Al-Alameen (all mankind and Jinns and all that exists). As Allah said:

'And We have sent you (O Muhammad (SAW)) not but as a mercy for the 'Alamîn (mankind, Jinns and all that exists)'.[426]

We can never get a true conception of Allah unless we understand the real meaning of Unity. With the confession of this Holy Code 'La Ilaha illa Allah, Muhammad (SAW) Rasul Allah' (None has the right to be worshipped except Allah and Muhammad (SAW) is the Messenger of Allah),

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[425] Surat Al-Ahzab: 40

[426] Surat Al-Anbiya: 107

a person enters in the fold of (i.e. embraces) the Islamic religion. Accordingly, it is essential to bear in mind that it is not enough to utter *'La Ilaha illa Allah, Muhammad (SAW) Rasul Allah'*, but it is very important to understand its meanings, to act upon it and to convey this Holy Kalima to others (i.e., La Ilaha illa Allah, Muhammad (SAW) Rasul Allah 'None has the right to be worshipped except Allah and Muhammad (SAW) is the Messenger of Allah'). So whoever has confessed this Holy Kalima *'La Ilaha illa Allah, Muhammad (SAW) Rasul Allah'*, that person must not commit sins like killing, stealing, illegal sexual intercourse, eating or drinking whatever Allah has forbidden, cheating, bribery and earning through illegal means, telling lies, back-biting etc. When someone commits any of the above mentioned sins or others, he should know that it is a sin and he obliged to repent to Allah, and ask His Forgiveness. Otherwise such a person will be considered a liar in his words, which he pledged to Allah through his tongue.

O Allah, You are my Lord, none has the right to be worshipped but You and You are the greatest. You created me and I am Your slave and I try my best to keep my Faith with You and to live in the hope of Your promise. To You belongs the authority and You have power over all things. There is no power or any strength except with Your permission.

2.2. Recitation of the Qur'an: Learning and Teaching it

The Noble Qur'an is Allah's word to mankind. Reading of the Qur'an as a part of Faith and religious devotion is recommended by Allah and His Messenger (SAW). Allah said:

'So, recite you of the Qur'an as much as may be easy for you. He knows that there will be some among you sick, others travelling through the land, seeking of Allah's Bounty; yet others fighting in Allah's Cause. So recite as much of the Qur'an as may be easy (for you)'.[427]

When reading the Qur'an, we must sincerely seek to understand it and study it as it should be studied. This is signified in the words of Allah:

'Those to whom We have given the Book (the Qur'an)] recite it (i.e. obey its orders and follow its teachings) as it should be recited (i.e. followed), they are the ones that believe therein. And those who reject Faith (disbelieve in it (the Qur'an), those are the losers'.[428]

People of God (Allah) seek to get closer and

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[427] Surat Al-Muzammil: 20

[428] Surat Al-Baqarah: 121

to Him by reciting the Qur'an and performing all duties that He ordained. They hope for a trade that will never fail. Allah said:

'Verily, those who recite the Book of Allah (the Qur'an), and perform As--Salah (prayers), and spend (in charity) out of what We have provided for them, secretly and openly, hope for a (sure) trade -gain that will never perish'.[429]

We must ponder over its Ayats and meditate on its signs in an earnest spirit so that we can learn from it the true lessons of sacred life and help us to resolve all doubts that there may be in our minds. This is stated in Allah's words:

'This is) a Book (the Qur'an) which We have sent down to you, full of blessings that they may ponder over its Ayats, and that men of understanding may remember'.[430]

People of sincere Faith take Allah's Book to heart, rehearsing it during day and at night. In doing so, they are moved more and more to understanding the signs of Allah thereby performing righteous deeds. In this respect Allah said:

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[429] Surat Fatir: 29

[430] Surat Sad: 29

'Do they not then think deeply in the Qur'an, or are their hearts locked up (from understanding it)?'[430]

We have been instructed of the etiquettes when reciting or studying the Qur'an. This can be summed up as follows:

- It is essential to have Tahara before touching the Qur'an or reading from it, sitting in a clean place in a respectful position.
- It is crucial to seek Allah's protection from the Shaytan (Satan). The formal expression of it-as in the formula, *'Audhu Bi-lahi Minash Shaytranir Rajim, Bis-Millahir Rahmanir Rahim'* (I seek Allah's refuge from the Shaytan 'the cursed/rejected one'). This is signified in Allah's words:

'So when you want to recite the Qur'an, seek refuge with Allah from Shaitân (Satan), the outcast (the cursed one)'.[431]

- We must read the Qur'an as whole-mindedly and not by formal mechanical way. We must do it with tranquillity and submission. We have to think about what we read and understand it so that we can put it into practice. This is indicated in Allah's words:

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[430] Surat Muhammad (SAW): 24

[431] Surat An-Nahl: 98

'And (it is) a Qur'an which We have divided (into parts), in order that you might recite it to men at intervals. And We have revealed it by stages'.[432]

- It is desirable to recite the Qur'an in a pleasant voice and in accordance with the principles of Tajweed (Rules of recitation i.e. proper pronunciation in a beautiful tone of voice). This is signified in the Hadeeth narrated by Abu Hurairah (RA), I heard the Messenger of Allah (SAW) saying:

"Allah does not listen so attentively to anything as He listens to the recitation of the Qur'an by a Prophet who recites well with a melodious and audible voice".[433]

A practical way to learn the rules of recitation and to read the Qur'an properly is to learn the classical Arabic of the Qur'an.

- When the Qur'an is read, we have been commanded to be quiet and listen to it attentively. Allah said:

'So, when the Qur'an is recited, listen to it, and be silent that you may receive mercy'.[434]

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[432] Surat Al-Isra: 106

[433] Al-Bukhari and Muslim

[434] Surat Al-Araf: 204

· It is also desirable to sit in assembly to read the Qur'an, discussing its Ayats and the facts it contains. Narrated Abu Hurairah (RA), The Messenger of Allah (SAW) said:

"Any group of people that assemble in one of the Houses of Allah to study the Qur'an, tranquillity will descend upon them, mercy will engulf them, angels will surround them and Allah will make mention of them to those (the angels) in His proximity".[435]

We have been informed that there are significant merits and great rewards for those who recite the Holy Qur'an and act upon its injunctions:

1. People who read the Qur'an in accordance with the principles of At-Tajwid (Rules of recitation) will be associated with the Noble, virtuous and honourable recording angels. Aishah (RA) reported that: The Messenger of Allah (SAW) said:

"The one who is proficient in the recitation of the Qur'an will be with the honourable and obedient scribes (angels)".[436]

2. People who love and act upon the teachings of the Qur'an (its laws and orders) will be blessed with great honour by Allah. Allah will elevate

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[435] Muslim

[436] Al-Bukhari and Muslim

them and grant them a high rank. They are loved by Allah and get pleasure from public respect. Those who disregard the teachings of the Qur'an will be disgraced and dishonoured in both this world and the Hereafter. Narrated Umar bin Al-Khatab (RA), Allah's Messenger (SAW) said:

"Verily, Allah elevates some people with this Qur'an and humiliates others".[437]

3. The believer who recites the Qur'an and teaches it is considered to be the best amongst the believers. Uthman bin Affan (RA) reported that the Messenger of Allah (SAW) said:

"The best among you is he who learns the Holy Qur'an and teaches it".[438]

4. Remembering the Qur'an is a means to get Allah's grace and attain higher ranks in Paradise. The more one remembers the Qur'an, the greater his heart will be filled with Faith and the higher would be the status that he will go on attaining through its blessings. Narrated Abdullah bin Amr bin Al-As (RAHM): the Prophet (SAW) said:

"The one who was devoted to the Qur'an will be told on the Day of Judgement: 'Recite and ascend (in ranks) as

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[437] Muslim

[438] Al-Bukhari

you used to recite when you were in the world. Your rank will be at the last Ayat you recite".[439]

5. The Qur'an will intercede with Allah in the Day of Judgement on behalf of those who used to recite it and apply it. Abu Umamah (RA) narrated that he heard the Messenger of Allah (SAW) saying:

"Recite the Holy Qur'an, because on the Day of Resurrection, it will come as an intercessor for those who recite it".[440]

The above merits imply:
- Reading the Qur'an to ourselves,
- Studying it to understand its rules and regulations,
- Acting upon it so as to accord our knowledge, life and desires with its laws,
- Teaching it to others,
- Publishing it abroad to the world.

We have also been commanded to safeguard the Qur'an and warned against forgetting or deserting it. This is signified by the words of Allah:

'And the Messenger (Muhammad (SAW)) will say: "O my Lord! Verily, my people deserted

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[439] Abu Dawud and At-Tirmidhi

[440] Muslim

this Qur'an (neither listened to it, nor acted on its laws and orders)'.[441]

Ibn Abbas (RA) reported that Allah's Messenger (SAW) said: *"He who does not memorise any part of the Qur'an he is like a ruined house".*[442]

To treat the Qur'an with neglect i.e. something to be discarded can ruin the hearts and prevent them from attaining Allah's grace. This is indicated by Allah's words:

'Do they not then think deeply in the Qur'an, or are their hearts locked up (from understanding it)?'.[443]

We have also been commanded to memorize the whole Qur'an or recite it. However, there are some special Ayats and Surah of the Qur'an we are advised to memorize or recite because of their merits and virtues. For instance we are instructed to memorize Surat Al-Fatiha, Al-Ikhlas, Al-Falaq, An-Nas, Al-Mulk, Surat Al-Baqarah, etc.

May Allah strengthen our Faith and guide us to recite the Qur'an and act upon its injunctions so that we can gain His blessing and honour.

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441 Surat Al-Furqan: 30

442 At-Tirmidhi

443 Surat Muhammad (SAW): 24

2.3. Ad-Du'a (Supplication)

Indeed Muslims are very fortunate that Allah has guided them to the right path. Therefore, we have to show our gratitude to Allah for guiding us. In this case, turning in supplication to Allah and asking Him Alone in all matters is the key to salvation and the brainpower of Faith. We must have Faith in our Lord and believe that only Allah can respond to our Du'a. Allah listens to the distressed person when he calls upon him and relieves him of his suffering. Indeed supplication is a fundamental act of worship. Allah has commanded us to call upon Him humbly and sincerely, promising us He will respond to our supplication and fulfil our needs. This is signified by the words of Allah:

'And your Lord said; 'Invoke Me (ask Me for anything) I will respond to your (invocation). Verily! Those who scorn My worship (do not invoke Me, and do not believe in My Oneness), they will surely enter Hell in humiliation'.[444]

Similarly, Allah's Messenger (SAW) has emphasized that: *"Du'a (Supplication) is the essence of worship"*. And in another narration *"Du'a (Supplication) is the worship"*.[445]

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[444] Surat Ghafir: 60

[445] At-Tirmidhi, Ibn Majah and Ahmad

Ad-Du'a (Supplication) is an expression of one's modesty, weakness and helplessness before Allah. Narrated Anas (RA), the Messenger of Allah (SAW) said:

"Allah said: 'There are four features, of which one is Mine, one yours, one common between Me and you, and one is common between you and My slaves. The one that is Mine is that you shall not associate any other partner with Me, the one that is for you is that when you do a good deed I shall reward you for it, the one that is common between Me and you is that when you supplicate I shall respond to your supplications, and the one that is common between you and My slaves is that you should like for them what you like for your own selves".[446]

We have been informed that Muslims should never despair of the Mercy of Allah. Allah said:

'Say: O My slaves who have transgressed themselves (by committing evil deeds and sins)! Despair not of the Mercy of Allah: verily Allah forgives all sins. Truly He is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful'.[447]

There are certain manners that must be observed while making Du'a (Supplication) to Allah. It has been mentioned that for the Du'a (Supplication)

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[446] At-Tirmidhi

[447] Surat Az-Zumar: 53

to be accepted the earning of a person should be from lawful means otherwise his Du'a will be rejected. Narrated Ibn Abbas (RA) "Once, when I recited the Ayat of the Qur'an:**'O You people! Eat of what is on earth, lawful and good'** [448] in the presence of the Prophet (SAW), Sa'd Ibn Abi Waqqas (RA) got up and said: 'O Messenger of Allah! Ask Allah to make me one whose supplication is heard'. At this the Prophet (SAW) said:

'O Sa'd, consume lawful things and your supplications will be heard, and by Him in Whose hands is the soul of Muhammad (SAW), when a man puts into his stomach a piece of what is forbidden his prayers are not accepted for forty days, and a slave of Allah whose body is fed by usury or by what is forbidden becomes more deserving of the Hell-Fire".[449]

Similarly, Abu Hurairah (RA) reported that, Allah's Messenger (SAW) said:

"Allah the Almighty is good and accepts only that which is good. Allah has commanded the Faithful to do that which he commanded the Messengers, and the Almighty has said: 'O (you) Messengers! Eat of the Taiyibât [all kinds of Halâl (legal) foods which Allah has made legal (meat of slaughtered eatable animals, milk products, fats, vegetables, fruits, etc.], and do righteous deeds. Verily! I am Well-

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[448] Surat Al-Baqarah: 168

[449] Al-Hafiz ibn Marduwiyah

Acquainted with what you do. And Allah the Almighty has said: O you who believe (in the Oneness of Allah - Islamic Monotheism)! Eat of the lawful things that We have provided you with, and be grateful to Allah, if it is indeed He Whom you worship. Then he mentioned: the case of a man who, having journeyed far, is untidy and dusty and who spreads out his hands to the sky saying: O Lord! O Lord! - while his food is unlawful, his drink unlawful, his clothing unlawful, and he is fed unlawfully, so how can he be answered!" [450]

Allah's Messenger has highlighted desirable specific times and places for supplication. These are for instance, the day of Arafat, the night of Decree, Friday, the last part of the night, between the Adhan and Iqamah, etc. Narrated Abu Umamah (RA), the Messenger of Allah (SAW) was asked, 'What supplication finds the greatest acceptance?'. He answered:
"A prayer offered in the middle of the latter part of the night and after the prescribed prayers".[451]

We have also been told to increase supplications while prostrating because a slave becomes nearest to his Lord when he is in prostration thereby there is greater possibility of acceptance of supplication.[452]

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[450] Muslim

[451] At-Tirmidhi

[452] For further information see Riyad As-Salihin

We have been told of the acceptance of the supplications of specific people. Abu Hurairah (RA) reported that the Messenger of Allah (SAW) said:

"Three supplications are accepted: the prayer of the oppressed, the prayer of the traveller and the prayer of the parents in favour of their son".[453]

The Prophet (SAW) also said:

"The supplications of three persons are not rejected: the supplication of a fasting person at the time of breaking the fast, of a just ruler, and of a person who is wronged. Allah causes their supplications to rise above the clouds and gates of heaven are opened for them and Allah says: 'By My Majesty, I will help you, even it be after a while".[454]

We should invoke our Lord with humbleness, full submission and with eyes overflowing with tears. We must call on Him sincerely with fear and hope in our hearts. We should avoid any arrogance and vanity of requests or words.

'Invoke your Lord with humility and in secret. He likes not the aggressors'.[455]

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453 At-Tirmidhi and Abu Dawud

454 At-Tirmidhi

455 Surat Al-A'raf: 55

It has been mentioned that the supplication in ones absence is desirable and will be accepted by Allah. We are commanded to ask forgiveness for all our Muslim ancestors who preceded us in the Faith and to all of the believing men and the believing women. Narrated Abu Darda (RA), the Messenger of Allah (SAW) said:

"The supplication of a Muslim for his brother at his back (in his absence) is responded to as long as he makes a supplication for blessing for his brother and the Angel commissioned (for carrying supplication to his Lord) says: Ameen! Moreover, says: May it be for you too".[456]

We have been directed to call our Lord using his beautiful names and attributes. This is indicated in Allah's words:

'And (all) the Most Beautiful Names belong to Allah, so call on Him by them'.[457]

Our Prophet Muhammad (SAW) instructed us to choose comprehensive words for supplication. For instance to use much *'Ya-Dhal Jalali Wal-Ikram, Ya-Hayu Ya-Qayoom'* in our Dua. He (SAW) liked comprehensive supplications and the one he recited most often was: *"O Allah, give us good in this world and good in the Hereafter, and save us from the*

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[456] Muslim

[457] Surat Al-A'raf: 180

punishment of the Fire". He (SAW) also informed us of certain supplication for certain circumstances and occasions: For instance, the Prophet (SAW) ordered us that whenever we arrive somewhere we should say " I, with the perfect words of Allah seek refuge in Him from the evil of what He has created". Narrated Abu Bakr (RA), he requested Allah's Messenger (SAW) to teach him a supplication, which he should recite in his prayer. Thereupon the Prophet said: Recite:

"O Allah! I have done great wrong to my self. There is none to forgive the sins but You. Grant me pardon from yourself and have mercy on me for You are the most Forgiving and Compassionate".[458]

The life of this world is not the end of all things, since we are to be held accountable of our actions in the Hereafter. Thus Ad-Du'a (Supplication) which has been regarded as the essence of worship should be reserved for Allah Alone and it should not be addressed to anyone else in any case. A believer should turn to Allah in every matter, and to care about His pleasure regarding every act. A believer should never feel shy of supplicating to Allah. It is, therefore, essential that he should never cease to supplicate whether his Du'a is granted or not. Persistence in Du'a is certainly beneficial to him. But pride will have its fall.

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[458] Al-Bukhari

O Allah! We seek refuge in You from the knowledge which is not beneficial, and from a heart, which does not fear, and from desire, which is not satisfied, and from Du'a (supplication) which is not answered.

2.4. Seeking Forgiveness of Allah and turning to Him in Repentance

It has been mentioned that committing sins regularly will darken and harden the heart. It may even lead a person to reject Allah completely (May Allah forbid) or lead him to commit a bigger sin. In Islam there is no recourse for a sinner except to Ask Allah for repentance from the heart. The fact that seeking forgiveness of Allah and turning to Him in Repentance is a part of Faith has been indicated in the words of Allah:

'And turn in repentance and in obedience with true Faith (Islamic Monotheism) to your Lord and submit to Him, (in Islam), before the torment comes upon you, then you will not be helped'.[459]

Repentance is obligatory in the light of the Qur'an, the Prophet's traditions and the opinion of the Muslim scholars. We are clearly commanded to turn together towards Allah inseeking

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[459] Surat Az-Zumar: 54

forgiveness and in repentance so that we can get real success and bliss, which is the aim of our spiritual enterprise. Allah said:

'And all of you beg Allah to forgive you all, O, that you may be successful'.[460]

Every Muslim should ask forgiveness and turn to Allah with sincere repentance. Allah said:

'And seek the Forgiveness of Allah, certainly, Allah is ever Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful'.[461]

Abu Hurairah (RA) reported that he heard the Messenger of Allah (SAW) saying:

"I swear by Allah that I seek forgiveness of Allah and turn to Him in repentance more than seventy times a day".[462]

Although the Prophet (SAW) was innocent and free of sins, and had all his past and future sins forgiven by Allah, he sought forgiveness very often. He used to supplicate for the forgiveness of his shortcomings out of his gratitude to Allah's Might. Thus the above Hadeeth stresses the fact that one should seek forgiveness though he feels

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[460] Surat An-Nur: 31

[461] Surat An-Nisa: 106

[462] Al-Bukhari

that he is innocent and should never be unmindful of Allah's Wrath. In fact, one should always seek Allah's protection and do such virtuous deeds, which please Him.

Allah accepts a servant's repentance until he gives up his spirit in death. Anas narrated that Allah's Messenger (SAW) said:

"Allah is more pleased with the repentance of His slave than anyone of you who is pleased with finding his camel which he had lost in a desert".[463]

Imaam Ibn Al-Qayyim (rmh) has mentioned specific significant benefits of sincere repentance:

- Repentance is the most Noble and beloved act of worship or of obedience in the sight of Allah. This is why He loves those who repent just as a traveller is happy when he finds his lost camel in the desert.
- Repentance brings about humbleness and a sense of helplessness that is not easily acquired through other forms of worship.

It is essential to repent from every sin. In case a sin is committed by a bondsman that relates to Allah only, without involving any one else, there are three conditions to be fulfilled for its

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463 Al-Bukhari

acceptance:

- He should refrain from committing more sins. In other words the sin, which we are repenting for, is discontinued immediately.
- He should feel ashamed at what he/she has done. A firm resolution is made never to repeat the sin again.
- He should sincerely regret.

In case when a sin has been committed where another person is involved, the repentant should testify his acquittal by the following: If he has

- stolen, he has to handle back the property to its owner,
- humiliated some one, he must beg pardon of him,
- indulged in back-biting against someone, he should seek forgiveness from that person concerned and get it remitted.

Abu Musa Al-Ashari (RA) narrated that the Messenger of Allah (SAW) said:

"Allah, the Exalted and Glorious, stretches out His Hand during the night so that the people may repent for the fault committed from dawn till dusk and He stretches out His Hand during the day so that the people may repent for the fault committed from dusk to dawn (He would accept repentance) before the sun rises in the

West".[464]

In the same way, Shaddad bin Aus (RA) reported that, the Prophet (SAW) said:

"The most superior way of asking for forgiveness from Allah is: (O Allah, You are my Lord! None has the right to be worshipped but You. You created me and I am Your slave, and I am Faithful to my covenant and my promise (to you) as much as I can. I seek refuge with You from all the evil I have done. I acknowledge before You all the blessings You have bestowed upon me, and I confess to You all my sins. So I entreat You to forgive my sins, for nobody can forgive sins except you). The Prophet (SAW) added "if somebody recites them during the day with firm Faith in it, and dies on the same day before the evening, he will be from the people of Paradise; and if somebody recites it at night with firm Faith in it, and dies before the morning, he will be from the people of Paradise".[465]

Allah loves those people who, after committing a sin, immediately give up and seek forgiveness for their sins from Allah. By seeking forgiveness, a relationship with Allah is constructed between man and His Creator. So we should constantly seek forgiveness from Allah and never feel despair of His Mercy. O Slave of Allah! Remember the words of Allah:

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[464] Muslim

[465] Al-Bukhari

'Say: "O 'Ibâdî (My slaves) who have transgressed against themselves (by committing evil deeds and sins)! Despair not of the Mercy of Allah, verily Allah forgives all sins. Truly, He is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful'.[466]

However abundant our sins may be, Allah will forgive all, provided we seek forgiveness from Allah and never persist in what wrong we have done. Anas (RA) said: I heard Allah's Messenger saying:

"Allah, the Exalted, has said: 'O son of Adam! I shall go on forgiving you so long as you pray to Me and aspire for My forgiveness whatever may be your sins. O son of Adam! I do not care even if your sins should pile up to the sky and should you beg pardon of Me, I would forgive you. O son of Adam! If you come to Me with an earthful of sins and meet Me, not associating anything with Me in worship, I will certainly grant you as much pardon as will fill the earth'".[467]

Islam demolishes all the previous evil deeds after repentance. Allah has opened the door of repentance and it will not be closed until the sun rises from the west, so why should you not enter? Have you not listened to the call of Allah in which He says:*"O My slaves! You sin morning and evening and I forgive all your sins. So call on Me, I will forgive you all*

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[466] Surat Az-Zumar: 53

[467] At-Tirmidhi

your sins".

Narrated Ibn Abbas (RA), some pagans who committed murders in great number and committed illegal sexual intercourse excessively, came to Muhammad (SAW) and said: "O Muhammad (SAW)! Whatever you say, and invite people to, is good, but we wish if you could inform us whether we can make an expiation for our (past evil) deeds. The Prophet (SAW) replied:

"Allah extends His hands in the night to forgive the sinner of the day and extends His hands in the day to forgive the sinner of the night. Therefore, why do not you turn to Him?".

In this context Allah also said:

'Will they not repent to Allah and ask His Forgiveness? For Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful'.[468]

O Allah! Make us from those who repent sincerely and from those who love purification. O Allah! We have considerably wronged ourselves. There is none to forgive the sins but You. So grant us pardon and have mercy on us. You are the Most Forgiving, the Most Compassionate.

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[468] Surat Al-Ma'idah: 74

2.5. Adh-Dhikr (Remembrance) of Allah

Adh-Dhikr (Remembrance) of Allah includes every act of service and goodness, for this is the service and sacrifice, which Allah requires of us. All words of praise and glory to Allah, whether one utters them by tongue or says them silently in the heart are known as Dhikr. As a part of Faith the remembrance of Allah is considered the key to salvation in this life and in the Hereafter. This is indicated in Allah's words:

'Indeed whosoever purifies himself shall achieve success. And remembers (glorifies) the Name of his Lord and prays'.[469]

In its verbal significance Adh-Dhikr implies: to remember and praise Allah by regularly mentioning. If we fail in this, the loss is our own, not any one else, for it inhibits our own spiritual growth. We have been commanded to practice Dhikr i.e. to remember Allah always and ever. This is indicated in Allah's words:

'O you who believe! Remember Allah with much remembrance'.[470]

Remembrance of Allah is the greatest act of

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[469] Surat Al-A'l: 14-15

[470] Surat Al-Ahzab: 41

worship in life. Therefore we are told to remember Him by our tongue and within ourselves, humbly and with fear. He (SWT) has stated:

'Therefore remember Me (by praying, glorifying, etc.). I will remember you, and be grateful to Me (for My countless Favours on you) and never be ungrateful to Me'.[471]

Remembrance of Allah is an integral part of worship and the foundation of good deeds. Whoever succeeds in doing so he is blessed with the close friendship of Allah. On the authority of Abdullah Ibn Busr (RA), a man said to the Prophet (SAW): "O Messenger of Allah, the rights of Islam are much for me, so tell me of something that I might hold fast to". The Prophet (SAW) said:

'Let not your tongue cease from the remembrance of Allah'.[472]

Allah's Messenger (SAW) considered Dhikr Allah as the highest act of worship and would often instruct his companions to practice it. This is indicated in the Hadeeth narrated by Abud-Darda (RA), Allah's Messenger (SAW) said:

"Shall I not inform you of the best of your actions which

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[471] Surat Al-Baqarah: 152

[472] Al-Bukhari

high ranks, which are more efficacious than spending gold and silver (in charity), and better for you than you should encounter your enemies whom you will chop their necks and they will chop your necks?" They said, 'certainly'. He (SAW) said: "Remembrance of Allah the Exalted".[473]

Our tongues should always be wet with the remembrance of Allah. We are commanded to remember Him standing, sitting, in the morning, during the day, at sea or on land, on journey or at home, in poverty and in prosperity, in sickness or in health, openly and secretly and in fact, all times throughout our lives and in all circumstances. This is indicated in the words of Allah:

'When you have finished As-Salah (the prayer - congregational), remember Allah standing, sitting down, and lying down on your sides'.[474]

Narrated Abu Hurairah (RA), the Prophet (SAW) said:

"Allah says, I am just as My slave thinks I am, (i.e. I am Able to do for him what he thinks I can do for him) and I am with him if he remembers Me. If he remembers Me in himself, I too, remember him in Myself; and if he remembers Me in a group of people, I remember him in a group

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[473] At-Tirmidhi

[474] Surat An-Nisa: 103

that is better than them; and if he comes one span nearer to Me, I go one cubit nearer to him; and if he comes one cubit nearer to Me, I go a distance of two outstretched arms nearer to him; and if he comes to Me walking, I go to him running".[475]

It has been mentioned that frequent remembrance of Allah purifies hearts and souls and fills our consciousness with Allah. It is the key to success, prosperity and salvation. This is signified in Allah's Words:
'And remember Allah much, that you may be successful'.[476]

Success or prosperity cannot be measured by wealth or worldly gains. There is a higher success, - an internal state of satisfaction i.e. peace of mind, tranquillity of the soul and serenity of the heart. For without doubt, through remembrance of Allah, hearts find peace and satisfaction. Allah said:

'Those who believe (in the Oneness of Allah - Islamic Monotheism), and whose hearts find rest in the remembrance of Allah, Verily, in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find rest'.[477]

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[475] Al-Bukhari

[476] Surat Al-Jumuah: 10

[477] Surat Ar-Ra'd: 28

This Ayat stresses the fact that the only medicine in a time of distress is the remembrance of Allah Whose Help alone should be sought. Remembrance of Allah can also lead to forgiveness of all sins. Allah said:

'And the men and the women who remember Allah much with their hearts and tongues (while sitting, standing, lying, etc.'.[478]

This Ayat highlights a significant point: people (men or women) who remember Allah and are obedient to Him, will be rewarded equally. It has also been mentioned that frequent remembrance of Allah livens the heart. Narrated Abu Musa (RA), Allah's Messenger (SAW) said:

"The example of the one who remembers (glorifies the Praises of) his Lord, (Allah) in comparison to the one who does not remember his lord, is like that of a living creature compared to a dead one".[479]

Abu Hurairah (RA) reported that he heard the Messenger of Allah (SAW) saying:
"The world is accursed and what it contains is accursed, except remembrance of Allah and what He loves, a learned man, or a learner".[480]

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[478] Surat Al-Ahzab: 35

[479] Al-Bukhari

[480] At-Tirmidhi

The Hadeeth highlights the fact that praising Allah and glorifying Him is a great virtue, which will last and will be rewarded, while the world and all that it has is temporary and will end. Life and death lie in Allah's Hands. Whenever He wills, the light of our life will be put out. Narrated Mu'awiyyah (RA), the Prophet (SAW) went out to a circle of his companions and asked: *"What makes you sit here?"*. They said: 'We are sitting here in order to remember Allah and to praise Him because He guided us to the path of Islam'. Thereupon the Prophet (SAW) adjured them by Allah and asked if that was the only purpose of their sitting there. They said: 'By Allah we are sitting here for this purpose only'. At this the Prophet (SAW) said: *"I am not asking you to take an oath because of any misapprehension against you, but only because Gabriel came to me and informed me that Allah was telling the angels that He is proud of you"*.[481]

Remembrance of Allah is a means where we can renew our faith and the best remembrance of Allah is the repetition of La ilaha illa Allah (None has the right to be worshipped but Allah). Narrated Abu Hurairah (RA), the Prophet (SAW) said:

"When a slave of Allah utters the words La ilaha illa Allah sincerely, the doors of Heaven open up for these

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[481] Muslim

words until they reach the Throne of Allah, so long as its mutterer keeps away from the major sins".[482]

Another significant comprehensive form of Dhikr is also reported by Abu Hurairah (RA), the Prophet (SAW) said:

"There are two phrases that are light on the tongue but heavy on the scale of rewards and are dear to (Allah) the Gracious. These are: Subhanallah wa bi-hamdihi (All Glory is to Allah and all Praise to Him) and Subhanallah al-adhim (Glorified is Allah, the Great)".[483]

Consequently, we should spend these few days of life in the remembrance of Allah. In fact, every believer should make the remembrance of Allah a permanent feature of his/her life and in all conditions. People should not let trade or sale or any other worldly interests divert them from the remembrance of Allah. If people indulge in this rather than the remembrance of Allah, their hearts become hardened, which is a sign of being far from Allah's Mercy. Allah said:

'Then, after that, your hearts were hardened and became as stones or even worse in hardness'.[484]

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[482] At-Tirmidhi

[483] Bukhari and Muslim

[484] Surat Al-Baqarah: 74

It is required that when a person wishes to do Dhikr, he should be clean in body and clothes and smell sweet and fragrant. May Allah give us the ability and understanding to practice upon this and be not of those who are neglectful. O Allah! Forgive us and help us to remember You. Our Lord! All praise is for You as much as Your Glory and Sublime Majesty rightly deserve.

2.6. Refraining from Al-Laghw (dirty, evil vain talk, falsehood, etc.)

Every Muslim should refrain from false talk because it is from ignorance. The fact that Refraining from Al-Laghw is a part of Faith has been signified in Allah's words and the Hadeeth of the Prophet (SAW). Allah said:

'And those who turn away from Al-Laghw'.[485]

This Ayat tells us a fact, which can be observed in our daily life. It is Al-Laghw (Idle talk), which many people are involved in. The lesson we learn from this Ayat is that: avoiding vain talk is one of the characteristics of the believers. Therefore, we should strictly guard our speech, weigh our words and turn away from idle talk to avoid Allah's Wrath. Allah the Most High also said:

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[485] Surat Al-Mu'minun: 3

'And when they hear Al-Laghw they withdraw from it and say 'To us our deeds, and to you your deeds. Peace be to you. We seek not the ignorant'.[486]

We have been strongly commanded to speak the truth and talk that which is good and beneficial to us. This is signified in the words of Allah:

'O you who believe! Keep your duty to Allah and fear Him and speak always the truth'.[487]

Narrated Abu Hurairah (RA), Allah's Messenger (SAW) said:

"Whosoever believes in Allah and the Last Day should not harm his neighbour, and whosoever believes in Allah and the Last Day should entertain his guest generously and whosoever believes in Allah and the Last Day should talk what is good or keep quiet".[488]

We have also been informed that controlling the tongue is the key to salvation. Abu Sa'id Al-Khudri (RA) reported that Allah's Messenger (SAW) said:

"When the son of Adam gets up at dawn, all the limbs

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[486] Surat Al-Qasas: 55

[487] Surat Al-Ahzab: 70

[488] Al-Bukhari

humble themselves before the tongue and say: Fear Allah for our sake because we are with you; if you are straight we shall also be straight and if you are crooked, we shall become crooked".[489]

This clearly reveals that taking hold of our tongues will save all our parts from committing evil. As it has been mentioned that people will be thrown on their faces into the Hell because of the harvest of their tongue. Therefore, we should not indulge in redundant or unnecessary talk except the remembrance of Allah. By doing so our brothers will be safe from our tongues and our bodies will be rescued from Fire. Narrated Sahl bin Sa'd (RA), Allah's Messenger (SAW) said:

"Whoever can guarantee (the chastity of) what is between his two jaw-bones (mouth and tongue) and what is between his two legs, I guarantee Paradise for him".[490]

Narrated Al-Mughirah (RA), the Prophet (SAW) used to forbid: *"(1) Qil and Qal (sinful and useless talk like backbiting, or that you talk too much about others); (2) asking too many questions (in disputed religious matters)); (3)wasting one's wealth (by extravagance); (4) to be undutiful to one's mother; (5) to bury the daughters alive; (6) to prevent you favours (benevolence to others (i.e. not to pay the rights of others: Az-Zakah, charity); and*

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[489] At-Tirmidhi

[490] Al-Bukhari

(7) and to beg of men or to ask others for something".[491]

We have been strongly commanded to refrain from saying: We have seen while in fact we have not seen or we have heard while we have not heard. Allah said:

'And follow not (O man i.e., say not, or do not or witness not, etc.), of which you have no knowledge (e.g. one's saying: "I have seen," while in fact he has not seen, or "I have heard," while he has not heard). Verily! The hearing, and the sight, and the heart, of each of those you will be questioned (by Allah)'.[492]

We must only hear the things that are known to us to be of good report, and see things that are good and instructive and entertain in our hearts feelings or in our minds ideas that we have reason to expect will be spiritually profitable to us. We shall be called to account for the exercise of every faculty that has been given to us. Curiosity is condemned and nosiness is to be avoided even if it does not reach the degree of positive evil.

O Allah! Let us enjoy our hearing, our sight and our power as long as You keep us alive and make our heirs from our own offspring.

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[491] Al-Bukhari

[492] Surat Al-Isra: 36

3. Confirmation of the body (Application of Faith)

In applying Faith to life, we have to consider two sets of duties: The duties of man to Allah (the rights of Allah: Huquq Allah) and the duties of man to fellow men and women (the rights of people: Huquq Al-ibad). The rights of Allah are man's duty towards Him. All works of goodness, piety and benevolence come under our duties to Allah. The duties of a man to Allah start with the Establishment of the five pillars of Islam, which are considered as a part of Faith.

Narrated Ibn Abbas (RA), when the delegation of the tribe of Abdul Qais came to the Prophet (SAW), the Prophet asked them: *"Who are the people (i.e. you)?"*. They replied: "We are from the tribe of Rabi'a". Then the Prophet said to them:*"Welcome! O people of Abdul Qais! Neither will you have disgrace nor will you regret"*. They said "O Allah's Messenger! We cannot come to you except in the sacred month and there is the infidel tribe of Mudar intervening between you and us. So please order us to do something good (religious deeds) so that we may inform our people whom we have left behind (at home), and that we may enter Paradise (by acting on them)". Then they asked about drinks (what is legal and what is illegal). The Prophet (SAW) ordered them to do four things

and forbade them from four things. He ordered them to believe in Allah Alone and asked them, *"Do you know what is meant by believing in Allah Alone?"*. They replied: "Allah and His Messenger know better." Thereupon the Prophet (SAW) said: *"It means:*
1. To testify that "La ilaha ill Allah wa anna Muhammad (SAW) Rasul- Allah": None has the right to be worshipped but Allah and Muhammad (SAW) is the Messenger of Allah;
2. Iqamat-as-Salah: to offer (compulsory congregation) prayers dutifully and perfectly;
3. To pay Az-Zakah (compulsory charity);
4. To observe Saum (fast during the month of Ramadan);
5. And to pay Al-Khumus (one-fifth of the booty to be given in Allah's Cause)".493

Ibn Umar (RAHM) narrated: Allah Messenger (SAW) said: *"Islam is based on five pillars".494* The first four of the above Hadeeth are mentioned and to perform Hajj (i.e. Pilgrimage to Makkah) is added.These duties (rights of Allah), which are considered as branches of Faith will be explained one by one.

3.1. Iqamat-as-Salah (Performing the five compulsory prayers)

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493 Al-Bukhari

494 Al-Bukhari

Prayer (as-Salah) is an effective means of communicating with Allah and it is the second practical right of Allah Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala on His slaves. It is considered as the backbone of religion. Prayer (as-Salah) establishes a firm connection between man and his Lord. It is the strong joint that attracts man to his Creator. The fact that performing Salah is a part of Faith has been signified in Allah's words and the Hadeeth of the Prophet (SAW). Allah said:

'The Mosques of Allah shall be visited and maintained only by those who believe in Allah and the Last Day; perform As-Salah, and give Zakah and fear none but Allah. It is they who are expected to be on true guidance'.[495]

We are commanded to establish the five daily regular prayers: The four afternoon prayers (Dhuhur, Asr, Maghrib and Isha) from the sun's decline till the darkness of the night as well as the early morning prayer (Fajr).Prayers pass into our inmost life and being, for then we realise the presence of Allah. They fill our hearts with Allah's light and strengthen our Faith. Abu Sa'id Al-Khudri (RA) reported that the Messenger of Allah (SAW) said: *"When you see a man frequenting the mosque, testify that he is a believer".*[496]

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[495] Surat At-Taubah: 18

[496] At-Tirmidhi

Every Muslim should offer the five regular compulsory prayers perfectly. This means that:

· Each and every Muslim, male or female, is obliged to offer his prayers regularly five times a day at the specified times; the male in a mosque in congregation and the female at home. This is signified in Allah's words:

'Verily, the prayer is enjoined on the believers at fixed hours'.[497]

· We should offer prayers with humility and entire submission to Allah. When praying we should realise Allah's presence and leave this life behind us. Allah said:

'Successful indeed are the believers. Those who offer their Salah (prayers) with all solemnity and full submissiveness'.[498]

· As faithful and righteous people we should devote ourselves to Allah and remain steadfast to our prayers. Devotion to prayers means a complete surrender of our being to Allah. This is indicated in the words of Allah:

'Except those devoted to Salah (prayers).

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[497] Surat An-Nisa: 103

[498] Surat Al-Mu'minun: 1-2

Those who remain constant in their Salah (prayers)'.[499]

· As we are directed to the spirit of sincerity in Salah, we are commanded to guard our prayers so as to get closer to Allah and attain His Pleasure. This is signified in Allah's words:

'And those who (strictly) guard their prayers. These are indeed the inheritors. Who shall inherit the Firdaus (Paradise). They shall dwell therein forever'.[500]

· The chief (of a family, town, tribe, etc.) and the Muslim ruler of a country are held responsible before Allah in case of non-fulfilment of this obligation by the Muslims under his authority. As the Prophet (SAW) has said:

"Order your children for Salah (prayers) at the age of seven and beat them (about it) at the age of ten".[501]

· One must offer the prayers as the Prophet (SAW) used to offer them with all their rules and regulations. As he (SAW) said: *"Offer your prayers the way you see me offering them".*[502]

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[499] Surat Al-Ma'arij: 22-23

[500] Surat Al-Mu'minun: 9-11

[501] Al-Bukhari

[502] Al-Bukhari

These regular prayers are beneficial to us. The merits and benefits of performing As-Salah (the prayers) have been mentioned in the Qur'an and in the sayings of the Prophet (SAW):

1. As-Salah (Prayer) is a light, which provides guidance to a Muslim and restrains him from shameful and evil deeds. It purifies us of anything (act, plan, mind, spirit, motive, words, etc.) of which we should be ashamed or which would work injustice to others. This is indicated in Allah's words:

'Verily, As-Salah (the prayer) prevents from Al-Fahshâ' (i.e. great sins of every kind, unlawful sexual intercourse, etc.) and Al-Munkar (i.e. disbelief, polytheism, and every kind of evil wicked deed, etc.)'.[503]

2. As-Salah is considered as one of the best deeds. Allah eradicates all sins as a result of performing prayers. Narrated Abu Hurairah (RA), the Messenger of Allah (SAW) said:

"The five daily prayers and the Friday prayer to the Friday prayer expiate whatever sins may be committed in between, so long as major sins are avoided".[504]

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[503] Surat Al-Ankabut: 45

[504] Muslim

3. As-Salah also develops in us a sense of self-discipline; knowing that we must stop whatever we are doing and joining our fellows in the mosque at the exact time, getting in the right frame of mind and making the appropriate bodily movements. In fact, the heart of a Muslim should be attached to mosques. Abu Hurairah (RA) reported that the Prophet (SAW) said: *"He who purifies (performs Wudu) himself in his house and then walks to one of the houses of Allah (mosque) for performing an obligatory Salah, one step of his will wipe out his sins and another step will elevate his rank".*[505]

This is why we are strictly warned against missing or giving up obligatory Salah (prayers). This is indicated in the words of Allah:

'Then, there has succeeded them a posterity who have given up As-Salah (the prayers) [i.e. made their Salah (prayers) to be lost, either by not offering them or by not offering them perfectly or by not offering them in their proper fixed times, etc.] and have followed lusts. So they will be thrown in Hell'.[506]

The result of missing Salah (Prayer) is destruction except those who repent and believe and work righteousness. Allah said:

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[505] Muslim

[506] Surat Maryam: 59

'But if they repent and perform As-Salah (Iqamat-as-Salah), and give Az-Zakah, then leave their way free. Verily, Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful'.[507]

Muslims should not miss prayers or show any laziness in them at all, lest they develop a resemblance with the hypocrites. Jabir (RA) narrated that he heard Allah's Messenger (SAW) saying: *"Between a man and disbelief and paganism is the desertion of Salah (Prayer)".*[508] The companions of Allah's Messenger (SAW) did not consider the abandonment of any action as Kufr (disbelief) except neglecting Salah. Similarly, many scholars consider leaving Salah deliberately as Kufr. Narrated Buraidah (RA), Allah's Messenger (SAW) said: *"That which differentiates us from the disbelievers and hypocrites is our performance of Salah. He who abandons it, becomes a disbeliever".*[509]

The importance of Salah has also been made adequately clear in the Hadeeth narrated by Abu Hurairah (RA), Allah's Messenger (SAW) said: *"The First of man's deeds for which he will be called to account on the Day of Judgement will be the Salah. If it is found to be perfect, he will be safe and successful; but if it is incomplete, he will beunfortunate and a loser".*[509]

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[507] Surat At-Taubah: 5

[508] Muslim

[509] At-Tirmidhi

Accordingly, Islam has been compared by the Prophet (SAW) to a building, which is based on five pillars. Salah is considered one of these practical pillars and the distinctive act of worship between belief and disbelief, as Allah's Messenger (SAW) said: *"The difference between Muslim and an infidel is neglecting prayers".510* For this reason, whoever denies Salah is considered as a disbeliever, and who neglects it owing to carelessness and inattention is a sinful and wicked Muslim.

Our Lord! Make us from those who perform As-Salah and (also) from our offspring, our Lord! And accept our supplication.

3.2. Ita' Az-Zakah (Giving compulsory charity)

Az-Zakah is an act of worship and it is the third right of Allah on his slaves. It is obligatory on all Muslims men and women above a certain level of wealth. It is a certain fixed proportion of the wealth (2.5%) of every Muslim to be paid yearly for the benefit of the poor in the Muslim community. The payment of Az-Zakah is obligatory, as it is one of the five pillars of Islam, which is to be collected to certain rules and regulations from the rich Muslims and distributed among the poor ones. The proof of the payment of Az-Zakah as

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510 Muslim

a part of Faith is signified in the words of Allah and the Sunnah of the Prophet (SAW). Allah Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala has stated:

'And they were commanded not, but that they should worship Allah, and worship none but Him Alone (abstaining from ascribing partners to Him), and perform As-Salah (Iqamat-as-Salah) and give Az-Zakah: and that is the right religion'.[511]

Ibn Abbas (RAm) narrated: The Prophet (SAW) sent Muadh (RA) to Yemen and said:

"Invite the people to testify that Laillaha illa-Allah (none has the right to be worshipped but Allah) and I am Allah's Messenger, and if they obey you to do so, then inform them that Allah has enjoined on them five Salah (prayers) in every day and night, and if they obey you to do so, then inform them that Allah has made it obligatory for them to pay the sadaqa (Az-Zakah) from their properties and it is to be taken from the wealthy among them and given to the poor among them".[512]

Az-Zakah is neither a charity nor a favour but a fixed right to be given to the eight types of people as mentioned in the Qur'an: Allah said:

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511 Surat Al-Bayyinah: 5

512 Al-Bukhari

'As Sadaqah (Here it means Az-Zakah) are only for the: (1) Fuqara (the poor who do not beg), and (2) Al-Masakin (the poor who beg), and (3) Amilin (those employed to collect the (funds); and (4) Muallafati Qulubihm (to attract the hearts of those who have been inclined (towards Islam); and (5) Fie-riqab (to free the captive); and (6) Al-Garimin (for those in debt); and (7) Fi Sabil Allah (for Allah's Cause), and (8) Ibn as-Sabil (for the wayfarer (a traveller who is cut off from everything); a duty imposed by Allah. And Allah is All-Knower, All-Wise'.[513]

Az-Zakah is a means of physical and spiritual purification and a key to attain success in this life and in the Hereafter. Az-Zakah doubles the riches, keeps away hardships and diseases and raises man in his rank in paradise. This is signified in Allah's words:

'Those who spend their wealth in the Cause of Allah, and do not follow up their gifts with reminders of their generosity or with injury, their reward is with their Lord. On them shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve'.[514]

Az-Zakah is the major economic means for

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513 Surat At-Tauba: 60

514 Surat Al-Baqarah: 262

establishing social justice and leading the Muslim society to prosperity and security. It helps in establishing security and peace among people, because many crimes like robbery and theft are committed pout of poverty. It unites the hearts and strengthens the connection between the rich and the poor. This is indicated in the words of Allah:

'Take Sadaqah (alms) from their wealth in order to purify them and sanctify them with it, and invoke Allah for them. Verily! Your invocations are a source of security for them, and Allah is All-Hearer, All-Knower'.[515]

The term Sadaqa means whatever is given in charity. In the above Hadeeth it means Az-Zakah, which is one specific kind of sadaqa. There are many ways of doing charity. Abu Hurairah (RA) narrated that a Bedouin came to the Prophet (SAW) and said: 'tell me of such a deed as will make me enter Paradise, if I do it'. The Prophet (SAW) said: *"Worship Allah, and worship none along with Him, perform prayers, pay the compulsory Az-Zakah and observe Saum (fasts) in the month of Ramadan"*.The bedouin said 'By Him, in whose Hands my soul is: 'I will not do more than this'. When the bedouin left, the Prophet (SAW) said: *"Whoever likes to see a man of Paradise, then he may look at this man"*.[516]

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515 Surat At-Taubah: 103

516 Al-Bukhari

Abu Musa Al-As'a ri (RA) reported that the Prophet (SAW) said:

"Giving a sadaqa (charity) is essential for every Muslim. It was said to him: what do you say of him who does not find (the means) to do so? He said: Let him work with both his hands, thus doing benefit to himself and charity. It was said to him: what about him who does not have (the means) to do so?. He said: then let him assist the needy, the aggrieved. It was said: What do you say of one who cannot even do this? He said: Then he should enjoin what is reputable or what is good. It was said to him: what about him if he cannot do that? He the Prophet (SAW) said: He should then abstain from evil, for verily that is charity on his behalf".[517]

Az-Zakah should be spent in the Allah's Cause. We have been warned against injuring our Zakah. Allah will not accept false (to be seen) Zakah. This is signified in Allah's words:

'O you who believe! Do not render in vain your Sadaqah (charity) by reminders of your generosity or by injury'.[518]

The person who renounces or denies the payment of Zakah is considered as a Kafir (a disbeliever) whereas the one who rejects the payment of it out

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517 Al-Bukhari and Muslim

518 Surat Al-Baqarah: 264

of negligence and disregard should be subjected to punishment till he starts paying it. This is indicated in the Hadeeth narrated by Abu Hurairah (RA): "When the Messenger of Allah (SAW) passed away, Abu Bakr was appointed as his successor (Caliph). Amongst the Arabs some men apostatised. Abu Bakr (RA) resolved to fight them. Umar bin Al-Khattab (RA) said to Abu Bakr (RA), 'How can you fight them when the Messenger of Allah (SAW) has declared: *'I have been commanded to fight people till they testify La Ilaha illa Allah (None has the right to be worshipped but Allah); and if they do it, their blood (life) and property are secured except when justified by law, and it is for Allah to call them to account'*. Upon this Abu Bakr (RA) said 'By Allah, I would definitely fight him who makes distinction between Salah and the Zakah, because it is an obligation upon the rich to pay Zakah. By Allah I will fight them even to secure the piece of rope which they used to give to the Messenger of Allah (SAW)'. Umar (RA) said: 'I realised that Allah opened the heart of Abu Bakr (RA) for fighting those refused to pay the Zakah, and I fully recognized that Abu Bakr (RA) was right".519

O Allah! Possessor of the kingdom, You give the kingdom to whom You will, and You take the kingdom from whom You will, and You endue

519 Al-Bukhari and Muslim

with honour whom You will, and You humiliate whom You will. In Your Hand is the good. Verily, You are Able to do all things.

3.3. As-Saum (Fasting during the month of Ramadan)

As-Saum (Fasting: not to eat or drink or have sexual relations from the Fajr: early Morning Prayer till the sunset) is an act of worship and compulsory for all Muslims, though there are exceptional circumstances, which exempt people from fasting. It is considered as the Muslim's fourth duty to Allah. It is a universal institution in as much as all the religions of the world and all the great religious personalities adopted fasting as the principal method of controlling and killing passions. Fasting is a spiritual worship that teaches good morals like honesty, faithfulness and loyalty and induces piety and fear of Allah. The evidence of observing fasting as a part of Faith is indicated in the following Ayats:

'O you who believe! Observing As-Saum (the fasting) is prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those before you, that you may become Al-Muttaqûn'.[520]

Allah also stated:

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[520] Surat Al-Baqarah: 183

'The month of Ramadan in which was revealed the Qur'an, a guidance for mankind and clear proofs for the guidance and the criterion (between right and wrong). So whoever of you sights (the crescent on the first night of) the month (of Ramadan i.e. is present at his home), he must observe Saum (fasts the month)'.[521]

The purpose of fasting is to attain a spiritual state of mind where it turns towards Allah for the whole day. Another purpose is train in self-discipline and it is an exercise in patience and endurance. A person who observes fasting becomes the master of his/her desires instead of a slave to them, thus making one feels closer to Allah because He only knows whether a person is fasting or not. Therefore it is a test as to whether one wants to please Allah or not. Fasting has also social benefits. Fasting gives the Muslims a feeling of brotherhood in practice. It draws them closer together and fills their hearts with love and affection. Narrated Abu Hurairah (RA), Allah's Messenger (SAW) said: *"My nation is given five privileges in the month of Ramadan that no nation was given before:*
1. The khaloof (the odour) of the mouth of a fasting person is sweeter in the sight of Allah thanthe fragrance of musk;

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[521] Surat Al-Baqarah: 185

2. The angels keep praying to Allah to forgive the fasting people until they break their fast;
3. Allah decorates Paradise every day saying to it 'My righteous slaves are about to be detached of their burdens and sufferings and enter you';
4. The Shayateen (Satans) are chained during this month;
5. Sins of the believers are forgiven by the last night of Ramadan".[522]

Fasting brings passion under control. Passion is the root of all evils, and this can be regulated by the method of fasting. Allah created man and his passion, He knows the best medicines for passions and therefore He prescribed fasting.

There are several sayings of the Prophet (SAW) relating to the virtues and merits, which a man receives from Allah by fasting in the month of Ramadan. In this month, the doors of mercy, forgiveness and kindness are specially opened and the doors of punishments are closed. Narrated Abu Hurairah (RA), Allah's Messenger (SAW) said: *"When the month of Ramadan arrives, the doors of Heaven are opened, the doors of Hell are closed and the devils are put under chains and according to another narration: the doors of mercy are opened".*[523]

It has also been narrated by Abu Hurairah (RA):

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[522] Muslim

[523] Bukhari and Muslim

Allah's Messenger (SAW) said:

"Whoever observes (fasts) during the month of Ramadan out of sincere Faith, and hoping to attain Allah's Rewards, then all his past sins will be forgiven".[524]

The Prophet (SAW) has pointed out to us the real spirit of fasting and has explained that to go hungry and thirsty while ignoring the spirit of fasting carries no value in the sight of Allah. The Prophet (SAW) said: *"If one does not give up speaking falsehood and acting by it, Allah does not require him to give up eating and drinking".*[525]

Fasting is a form of worship, which is entirely private. The All-Knowing Allah knows that his servant is fasting. You are required to take food before dawn and abstain from eating and drinking until it is time to break the fast. But if you secretly eat and drink in between, nobody except Allah will know about it. This private nature of fasting ensures that you have a strong Faith in Allah who knows everything. Only if your Faith is true and strong, you will not think of eating and drinking secretly, even in the hottest summer, when your throat dries up with thirst, you will not drink a drop of water. This strength could be developed only when you understand the purpose of fasting

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[524] Al-Bukhari

[525] Al-Bukhari

and have the desire to put to use the training you have undergone of curbing your physical desires for the love of Allah Alone. To do all this how strong must the fear of Allah be in your heart be? Had you the slightest doubt in Allah, and in meeting Him in the Hereafter, you would not complete such a fast. It is narrated on the authority of Abdullah bin Umar (RAHM): the Prophet (SAW) said:

"The fast and Qur'an will both plead on behalf of the bondsman (who will keep fast in the day and recite or listen attentively to the recital of the Qur'an in the night, standing in the presence of Allah). The fast will say: 'My Lord! I had held him back from food, drink and sexual satisfaction. Accept my intercession for him today and treat him with mercy and forgiveness'. And the Qur'an will say: 'I had held him back from taking rest and sleeping in the night'. O' Allah, accept my intercession for him today and treat him with mercy and forgiveness'. The intercession of both the fast and the Qur'an will be accepted for the bondsman and he will be treated with exceptional kindness".[526]

We are strongly advised to be generous during Ramadan. We are asked to do good deeds particularly spending for charity during Ramadan. Narrated Ibn Abbas (RAHM): "Allah's Messenger (SAW) was the most generous of the men, and he was the most generous during the month of

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[526] Al-Baihaqi

Ramadan when Gabriel visited him every night and recited the Qur'an to him. During this period, the generosity of Allah's Messenger (SAW) waxed faster than the rain bearing wind".[527] Providing something to the person observing fasting for breaking the fast is considered as a great act of virtue in Ramadan. Zaid bin Khalid Al-Juhani (RA) reported: The Prophet (SAW) said: *"He who provides a fasting person something with which to break his fast, will earn the same reward as the one who was observing the fast, without diminishing in any way the reward of the latter".*[528]

We are also strongly directed to concentrate more on the recitation of the Qur'an and Salah particularly on the last ten nights of Ramadan than any other months of the year. This is indicated in the Hadeeth narrated by Aishah (RA), "Allah's Messenger (SAW) used to strive more in worship during Ramadan than he strove in any other time of the year; and he would devote himself more (in worship of Allah) in the last ten nights of Ramadan than he strove in earlier parts of the month".[529] The observance of I'tikaf (Seclusion in the mosque) in the month of Ramadan is also recommended. This is signified in the Hadeeth narrated by Ibn Umar (RAHM): "Allah's

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527 Al-Bukhari and Muslim

528 At-Tirmidhi

529 Muslim

Messenger (SAW) usedto observe I'tikaf in the last ten days of Ramadan".[530]

Similarly we are instructed to fulfil all the requirements of fasting as stated in the Qur'an and the Hadeeth of the Prophet (SAW). We are commanded to safeguard the fast from the inappropriate use of the tongue and other acts which would nullify it. Narrated Abu Hurairah (RA), Allah's Messenger (SAW) said:

"When any one of you is observing fasting on a day, he should neither indulge in obscene language nor should he raise the voice; and if anyone reviles him or tries to quarrel with him he should say: 'I am observing fast".[531]

Having seriously glanced at the understanding of the aims of fasting, we should pray to Allah to enable us to keep this in our minds during Ramadan.

3.4. Al-Hajj (Pilgrimage to Makkah)

Al-Hajj (Pilgrimage) is considered to be the fifth duty of a Muslim to Allah once in his/her lifetime if one can afford it. The obligation of Hajj (Pilgrimage) has been mentioned in The Qur'an. Allah said:

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530 Al-Bukhari and Muslim

531 Al-Bukhari and Muslim

'And Hajj (pilgrimage to Makkah) to the House (Ka'bah) is a duty that mankind owes to Allah, those who can afford the expenses (for one's conveyance, provision and residence); and whoever disbelieves [i.e. denies Hajj (pilgrimage to Makkah), then he is a disbeliever of Allah], then Allah stands not in need of any of the 'Alamîn (mankind and Jinns)'.[532]

Allah's Messenger (SAW) has also considered Al-Hajj as a part of Faith and the superstructure of Islam. He (SAW) mentioned Hajj as one of the five obligatory pillars of Islam. This brings out the following points:

- Hajj (Pilgrimage) is compulsory once in a lifetime for those who fulfil the recommendations required for it and have the means to do it,
- People of Faith are required to perform what is ordained and refrain from what is prohibited.

Al-Hajj is considered as one of the most prominent religious acts, provided it is performed sincerely for Allah's Sake. Narrated Abu Hurairah (RA), the Prophet (SAW) was asked: "Which deed is the best?" He replied: *"Faith in Allah and His Messenger"* then he was asked: "What is next?" He replied: *"Jihad (holy fighting) in Allah's*

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[532] Surat Al-Hajj: 97

Cause." Then he was asked: "What is after that?" He replied: *"Hajj Mabrur (An Accepted Hajj)".*[533]

The significance of the pilgrimage is that all barriers, which normally divide, people, such as class, status, nationality, etc. become irrelevant on this occasion. They all feel equal before Allah, united in the Brotherhood of the Faith. The reward of Al-hajj-ul-Mabrur (the Hajj which is performed with the intention of seeking Allah's Pleasure and is in accordance with the Prophet's legal ways) is to have one's sins forgiven and entering Paradise. Narrated Abu Hurairah (RA), the Prophet (SAW) said: *"Whoever performs Hajj for Allah's sake only and does not have sexual relations with his wife, and does not do evil or sins then he will return (after Hajj free from all sins) as if he were born a new".*[534]

O Allah! Controller of the hearts, direct our hearts to Your obedience. We beg You for guidance and uprightness.

3.5. The removal of what is harmful from the road

The fact that the removal of what is harmful from the road is a part of faith has been stated in the Hadeeth narrated by Abu Hurairah (RA): the

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[533] Al-Bukhari and Muslim

[534] Al-Bukhari

Prophet (SAW) said:

"Al-Iman (Faith) consists of more than seventy branches (i.e. parts), the most excellent of which is the declaration of La Ilaha illa Allah (None has the right to be worshipped except Allah), and the humblest of which is the removal of what is harmful from the road, and Al-Hayha (modesty, self-respect, honour, etc.) is a part of Faith".[535]

The eminence of removing hurtful and dangerous things from the road has been mentioned in a number of Hadeeth of the Prophet (SAW). Abu Hurairah (RA) narrated that the Prophet (SAW) said:

"I have seen a man going about in Paradise as a reward for cutting down a tree which was overhanging a road and annoying people".[536]

Narrated Abu Dhur (RA), the Prophet (SAW) said:

"The deeds of my people, good and bad, were presented before me, and I found the removal of something objectionable from the road among their good deeds, and the sputum mucus removed from the mosque among their good deeds".[537]

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[535] Al-Bukhari

[536] Muslim

[537] Muslim

Abu Hurairah (RA) reported that the Prophet (SAW) said:

"Charity is due on every joint of a person, every day the sun rises. Administering of justice between two men is also a charity; and assisting a man to ride upon his beast, or helping him load his luggage upon it is a charity; and a good word is a charity; and every step that you take towards prayers is a charity and removing of harmful things from the path is a charity".[538]

It has been mentioned that one of the companions of the Prophet (SAW) used to say: *La Ilaha Ila Allah* (None has the right to be worshipped but Allah) when removing harmful things from the road. He was asked about this where upon he replied: 'I want to gather the highest of the branches of Faith and the lowest together'.

O Allah! Help us remember You, to be grateful to You, and to worship You in an excellent manner.

3.6. Acquirement of Religious Knowledge

Action has two fundamental elements: intention and movement. The correct action is that which matches the rules and regulations of Islamic teachings. Seeking knowledge is a divine act of worship that should be acquired and taught for

[538] Al-Bukhari and Muslim

the sake of Allah. This is why Umar bin Al-Khatab (RA) used to say in his Supplication "O Allah, make all my actions correct. Let it be sincerely for Your sake alone'.

However, actions will not be performed correctly unless it is based on knowledge and profound understanding of the Islamic law. Muslim scholars often say that knowledge is a way to worship Allah and gain His Pleasure. It is considered the key of divine actions and if actions are not based on knowledge, they are no more than an error and an act of ignorance. It is essential as a Muslim to know the condition of what is lawful and what is forbidden. Knowledge of command and prohibition should rightly lead to the straight path thereby attainment of the goal. Thus knowledge must precede both utterance and deeds. It is fundamental that a Muslim must acquire religious knowledge first before making statements. Knowledge, which consists of three basic principles: (a) the recognition of Allah, (b) the recognition of His Messenger (Muhammad (SAW) and (c) the recognition of the religion of Islam. It is essential for every Muslim man or woman to understand and act according to theses three principles. He should know that knowledge comes first, then words and deeds. This is supported by Allah's words:

'So know (O Muhammad (SAW)), Lâ ilaha ill-Allah (none has the right to be worshipped

but Allah), and ask forgiveness for your sin, and also for (the sin of) believing men and believing women. And Allah knows well your moving about, and your place of rest (in your homes)'.[539]

It is no wonder that knowledge has such a significance stature that when the Holy Qur'an was revealed, the first subject to be discussed was to read, learn and to teach.

'Read! In the Name of your Lord, Who has created (all that exists). Has created man from a clot (a piece of thick coagulated blood). Read! And your Lord is the Most Generous, Who has taught (the writing) by the pen. Has taught man that which he knew not'.[540]

An important lesson to be derived from the above Ayats is the high value, which Islam attaches to reading and knowledge. In the days before Islam (called days of ignorance) most people were illiterate and learning was only a privilege for priests and rich people. Islam is the first religion to encourage all of its followers to read, study and learn. At a time when women of almost all religion and cultures were not allowed to learn, Allah's Messenger said:

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[539] Surat Muhammad (SAW): Ayat 19)

[540] Surat Al-Alaq: 1-6

"Seeking knowledge is a duty for every Muslim, male and female".[541]

Knowledge, which should first be acquired, is of two types:

1. Knowledge of the Holy Qur'an, which should be understood and implemented. It is called knowledge of the religion. This is indicated in Allah's words:

'Allah bears witness that La ilaha illa Huwa (none has the right to be worshipped but He), and the angels, and those having knowledge (also give this witness); (He is always) maintaining His creation in Justice. La Ilaha illa Huwa (none has the right to be worshipped but He), the All-Mighty, the Wise'.[542]

2. The traditions of the Prophet (SAW) implemented, taught and explained. Allah said:

'And whatsoever the Messenger (Muhammad (SAW)) gives you, take it, and whatsoever he forbids you, abstain (from it), and fear Allah. Verily, Allah is Severe in punishment'.[543]

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[541] Muslim

[542] Surat Ali-Imran: 18

[543] Surat Al Hashr: 7

The excellence of knowledge and the fact it is a sign of Allah's gift has been indicated in a number of Ayats in the Qur'an and sayings of the Prophet (SAW). Narrated Mu'awiya (RA), 'I heard Allah's Messenger (SAW) saying: *"If Allah wants to do good to a person, He makes him comprehend the religion".*[544] Religion means: the understanding of the Qur'an and the Sunnah 'legal ways' of the Prophet (SAW). If a person has a hundred branches of knowledge, none of which lead him to the fear of Allah and on the other side one has one branch, which does lead him to the fear of Allah, then the second is far greater than that of the first. This is supported by the Ayat in the Qur'an where Allah has stated that:

'It is only those who have knowledge among His slaves that fear Allah. Verily, Allah is All-Mighty, Oft-Forgiving'.[545]

The person whose heart is illuminated by religious knowledge will see things in a different way and automatically his head will bow down due to thinking about the Power and Might of the Creator. The Messenger of Allah (SAW) has informed us that one knowledgeable person is more severe on the devil than a thousand worshippers. This is why it is very difficult for the

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[544] Al-Bukhari

[545] Surat Fatir: 28

devil to lead the true people of knowledge astray. Here lies the distinction between the people of knowledge and the people of great ignorance. Allah the All-Wise, the All-Knowing says in the Qur'an:

'Say: Are those who know equal to those who know not? It is only men of understanding who will remember'.[546]

Allah has raised high those who have been granted knowledge. He Says:

'Allah will exalt in degree those of you who believe, and those who have been granted knowledge'.[547]

The above Ayat stresses the importance of acquiring knowledge Abu Hurairah (RA) reported: Allah's Messenger said: *"Allah makes the way to Paradise easy for him who treads the path in search of knowledge".*[548]

It is recommended for a Muslim to acquire sound religious knowledge. Narrated Abdullah bin Mas'ud (RA), the Prophet (SAW) said: *"Do not wish to be like anyone except in two cases. The*

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546 Surat Az-Zumar: 9

547 Surat Al-Mujadilah 11

548 Muslim

first is a person, whom Allah has given wealth and he spends it righteously (according to what Allah has ordained in a just and right way); the second is the one whom Allah has given Al-Hikmah (wisdom i.e. knowledge of the Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet (SAW) and he acts according to it and teaches others".[549]

Acquiring knowledge is so superior in Islam to the extent that it has been mentioned that from among the signs of the Hour are the disappearance of religious knowledge and the appearance of ignorance. Narrated Anas (RA): Allah's Messenger (SAW) said: *"From among the portents of the Hour are the following:*

- *Religious knowledge will be taken away (by the death of religious learned men).*
- *Ignorance will prevail.*
- *Drinking of alcoholic drinks will be very common.*
- *There will be prevalence of open illegal sexual intercourse".*[550]

Allah's messenger (SAW) has awarded honour for those who acquired knowledge and he has directed us to place and entertain people according to their status. It has been narrated on the authority of Abu Masud Uqba bin Umar Al-Badri Al-Ansari (RA), the Messenger of Allah (SAW) used to place his hands upon our shoulders when we

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[549] Al-Bukhari

[550] Al-Bukhari

were forming rows for prayer and say: *"Stand in straight rows and do not differ among yourselves, else your hearts will suffer from discord. Let those be nearest to me who are aged and possess knowledge and understanding".*[551]

It has been reported by Anas (RA), Allah's Messenger (SAW) said: *"He who goes forth in search of knowledge is considered as striving in Allah's Cause until he returns".*[552] However, no matter whether one has more or less knowledge, he must communicate it to others. Abu Umamah (RA) reported that Allah's Messenger said: *"The superiority of the learned over the devout worshipper is like my superiority over the most inferior amongst you (in good deeds)".* He went on to say: *"Allah, His angels, the dwellers of the heaven and the earth, and even the ant in its hole and the fish (in water) supplicate in favour of those who teach people knowledge".*[553]

The merits of imparting beneficial knowledge has also been indicated in the Hadeeth narrated by Sahl bin sa'd (RA) who reported that the Messenger of Allah said to Ali (RA): *"By Allah, if a single person is guided by Allah through you, it will be better for you than a whole lot of red camels".*[554]

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551 Muslim

552 At-Tirmidhi

553 At-Tirmidhi

554 Al-Bukhari and Muslim

We have been informed that to withhold guidance in the matter of religion from anybody who seeks it, is a grave sin, which is threatened with Hell. Abu Hurairah (RA) reported that Allah Messenger (SAW) said: *"He who is asked about knowledge (of religion) and conceals it, will be bridled with a bridle of fire on the Day of Judgement".*[555]

Acquiring religious knowledge becomes one of the greatest challenges for Muslims in modern societies all over the world. Dissociation from religious education and knowledge will lead to ignorance of the virtues and advantages of the Divine Law and Heavenly teachings, thereby to the destruction of Muslim society. It has been observed that emphasising worldly and materialistic knowledge has strayed man from the right path. Islam enriches man with human values and knowledge that make him superior to angels. In fact it is because of this very greatness of knowledge that man was honoured by Divinity in ordering the angels to prostrate before him. It is only knowledge that we gain through the Qur'an and the Sunnah, which guides our wisdom to enable us to follow the right path of peace and prosperity. Such knowledge develops our soul, refreshes our belief and enlightens our hearts. It is this religious knowledge, alone which protects our Faith and can develop the character of our children and

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[555] Abu Dawud

lead them to success both in this world and the hereafter. We should appreciate and take advantage of the oceans of knowledge in front of us before there comes a time when there is a shortage of pious and knowledgeable people as well as the lack of true knowledge. That is why we should always pray for increase in our own knowledge, which can never at any given moment be complete. This is indicated in Allah's words:

'And say: My Lord! Increase me in knowledge'.[556]

In addition to the acquirement of religious knowledge, we should also obtain worldly knowledge, which helps us to fulfil our goal. However we should not prefer worldly benefits to the knowledge of the Hereafter, which would grant us Paradise. We cannot deny that knowledge of medicine, computing, law, maths, etc, is vital in this life, but we should not put the Faith of our children at risk by neglecting divine moral values. Let us immediately discontinue this negligence. Let us make all out efforts at taking every necessary step to ensure a good education (religious and worldly knowledge) for us and for our children and let us repent for our carelessness. In this context Allah said:

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[556] Surat Taha: 114

'But seek, with that which Allah has bestowed on you, the home of the Hereafter, and forget not your portion of legal enjoyment in this world, and do good as Allah has been good to you, and seek not mischief in the land. Verily, Allah likes not the Mufsidûn (those who commit great crimes and sins, oppressors, tyrants, mischief-makers, corrupts)'.[557]

That is, we have to employ our skills in good works and in attaining beneficial knowledge. It is Allah who has given us eyes, brains, ears, etc, and we should devote all these faculties in His Cause. Nor should we forget the legitimate needs of this life. We should adopt a balanced approach.

Let us pray for the betterment of the Muslim society at large and for the youth in particular, and that Allah strengthens and helps us to acquire knowledge. O Allah! Benefit us with what You have taught us and teach us what is beneficial for us and increase our knowledge. O Allah! Let not our hearts deviate after You have guided us on the right path.

3.7. Establishing voluntary prayers during the nights of Ramadan

The purpose of our creation is to worship our

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[557] Surat Al-Qasas: 77

Creator and to devote ourselves entirely for His Sake. This is indicated in Allah's words:

'And I (Allah) created not the Jinns and humans except they should worship Me (Alone)'.[558]

This point has also been emphasized in the Hadeeth recorded by Ahmed in which the Prophet (SAW) stated that Allah the Most High says:

"O son of Adam! Engage and devote yourself in My worship and I will fill your heart with contentment and I will fulfil your deeds but on the other hand if you do not do this, I will fill your heart with concern and apprehension and nor will I provide for you".[559]

It is clearly shown that the purpose of being created is only to worship Allah Alone. It is also made clear that we are dependent upon Allah for our survival while He has no need for us. Islam has signified several forms of worship for the fulfilment of this aim. One of the most effective ways of carrying out this purpose is by establishing voluntary good deeds. It has been narrated by Abu Hurairah(RA), Allah's Messenger (SAW) said:

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[558] Surat Adh-Dhariyat: 56-57

[559] Al-Bukhari

"Allah said: **'I will declare war against him who shows hostility to a pious worshipper of Mine. And the most beloved things with which My slave comes nearer to Me, is what I have enjoined upon him; and My slave keeps on coming nearer to Me through performing Nawafil (praying or doing voluntary deeds besides what is obligatory) till I love him. Then I become his sense of hearing with which he hears, and his sense of sight with which he sees, and his hand with which he grips, and his leg with which he walks; and if he asks Me, I will give him, and if he asks My Protection (refuge), I will protect him, and I do not hesitate to do anything as I hesitate to take the soul of the believer, for he hates death, and I hate to disappoint him'".**[560]

Although the Prophet (SAW) was addressed specifically to practise additional prayers at night (Tahajjud), we have to follow the teaching of the Prophet as he is our example. This is signified inn Allah's word:

'And in some parts of the night (also) offer the Salah (prayer) with it (i.e. recite the Qur'an in the prayer), as an additional prayer (Tahajjud optional prayer Nawâfil) for you (O Muhammad (SAW))'.[561]

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[560] Al-Bukhari

[561] Surat Al-Isra: 79

During the month of Ramadan, it is strongly recommended to establish Taraweeh (voluntary prayers) in congregation in the mosque. Narrated Abu Hurairah (RA), Allah's Messenger (SAW) said:

"Whoever establishes (voluntary) prayers during the nights of Ramadan Faithfully out of sincere Faith and hoping to attain Allah's rewards, all his past sins will be forgiven".[562]

It has also been narrated by Abu Hurairah (RA), Allah's Messenger (SAW) said:

"O people, greet one another, give food, maintain good ties with your relations, and pray in the night while people are asleep, you shall enter Paradise safely".[563]

I'tikaf (remaining in seclusion in the Masjid with the intention of worship by doing voluntary prayers and remembrance of Allah) is also considered one of the recommended acts of worship during the month of Ramadan. I'tikaf enjoys superiority over other acts or ways of worship because it encompasses many other forms of worship within itself. We have been informed that it used to be the general practice of the Messenger of Allah (SAW) in the Holy month of Ramadan

562 Al-Bukhari

563 At-Tirmidthi

performing prayers and remembrance of Allah. It has been mentioned by Muslim scholars that there are at least two benefits of performing I'tikaf:

1. The person performing I'tikaf is able to avoid sins particularly in the blessed month of Ramadan, which indeed would be a great injustice upon ourselves to commit sins in it. Through remaining secluded in the Masjid, one completely avoids the temptation of doing a sin.
2. Another benefit is that when one is secluded in the Masjid, he will be involved in performing voluntary prayers particularly Tahajjud (optional night prayers) and spiritual deeds. He will also be rewarded for those good deeds, which he could not perform (e.g. joining in funeral, attending burials, visiting the sick, etc) as a result of his I'tikaf.

We beg Allah not to deprive us from establishing voluntary prayers during the nights of Ramadan and other nights of the year.

3.8. Performance of Umrah

The term Umrah means visiting Makkah during which one performs the Tawaf around the Kabah and the Sa'y between As-Safa and Al-Marwah. It should be performed with the intention of seeking Allah's Pleasure only and in accordance with the Prophet's legal ways. The fact that performing Umrah is a part of Faith has been indicated in

Allah's words and the Hadeeth of the Prophet (SAW). Allah also said:

'And perform properly (i.e. all the ceremonies according to the ways of Prophet Muhammad (SAW)), the Hajj and 'Umrah (i.e. the pilgrimage to Makkah) for Allah'.[564]

The Prophet (SAW) performed Umrah four times in his lifetime. This is signified in the Hadeeth narrated by Ibn Abbas (RA), the Prophet (SAW) performed four Umrahs in his lifetime: "(1) Umrah of Hudaibiyah, (2) Umrah of Al-Qada, (3) Umrah from Al-Ji'rannah, and (4) Umrah that he combined with the Hajj".[565]

We have been encouraged to perform Umrah due to its superiority in our religion. There are numerous Hadeeth in which the Prophet (SAW) has stated the virtues of a person who performs Umrah. Performing Umrah is expiation for sins.

Abu Hurairah (RA) narrated, Allah's Messenger (SAW) said: *"The performance of Umrah is an expiation for the sins committed (between it and the previous one). And the reward of Al-Hajj Al-Mabrur (the one accepted by Allah) is nothing except Paradise".*[566]

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564 Surat Al-Baqarah: 196

565 Ahmad Abu Dawud and Ibn Majah

566 Al-Bukhari

Performing Umrah to the House of Allah is recommended on those who can afford to make the journey. The majority of scholars are of the opinion that Umrah can be performed any time during the year. The superiority of Umrah has been described in Allah's words and the Sunnah of the Prophet (SAW). Allah said:

'Verily! As-Safâ and Al-Marwah (two mountains in Makkah) are of the Symbols of Allah. So it is not a sin on him who performs Hajj or 'Umrah to the House (the Ka'bah at Makkah) to perform the going (Tawâf) between them (As-Safâ and Al-Marwah). And whoever does good voluntarily, then verily, Allah is All-Recogniser, All-Knower'.[567]

The Hajj is the complete pilgrimage, of which the chief rites are performed during the first twelve or thirteen days of the month of Thul-Hijja. The Umrah is a less formal pilgrimage at any time of the year. But the person who intends to perform Umrah has to wear the Ihram, both for (upper body-cover) and (lower half body-cover). He should do Tawaf (going round the Kabah seven times) and Sa'y (walking or going seven times between the two mountains As-Safa and Al-Marwa) as the basic ceremonies of Hajj or Umrah. The Sa'y is considered as a symbol of Allah;

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[567] Surat Al-Baqarah: 158

hence, it becomes compulsory for the one who performs Umrah or Hajj to go seven times between them. This is indicated in Allah's words.[568]

Umrah is considered one of the best deeds particularly when it is performed in the month of Ramadan. Ibn Abbas (RA) reported that Allah's Messenger (SAW) said: *"Umrah during Ramadan is equal to the performance of pilgrimage or equal to the performance of pilgrimage with me".*[569] Our Prophet (SAW) has informed us that the supplication of a person who performs Umrah will surely be accepted. Narrated Abu Hurairah (RA), Allah's Messenger (SAW) said: *"Those who make the pilgrimage for the Hajj or Umrah are the guests of Allah. The petitions they make will be granted and if they seek deliverance from sins their sins will be forgiven".*[570]

The reward of the performance of Umrah is according to the hardship which one encounters in performing it. This is indicated in the Hadeeth narrated by Aisha (RA), The Prophet (SAW) said to her in respect of Umrah that: *"the reward of it is according to your expenses or the hardship which you encounter while performing it".*[571]

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568 See Surat Al-Baqarah: 158

569 Al-Bukhari and Muslim

570 Ibn-Majah

571 Al-Bukhari

3.9. Tawaf (Circumambulation) of the Kabah at Makkah

The foundations of the Kabah, the House of Allah goes back to Ibrahim and his child Isma'il. It was the centre to which people resorted for trade and for worship. It was a sacred place and respected by all Arab tribes. The superiority of Makkah and the Kabah has been indicated in Allah's words:

'Allah has made the Ka'bah, the Sacred House, an asylum of security for mankind'.[572]

Tawaf as a part of Faith was enjoined upon Muslims and upon all previous nations. The Kabah at Makkah was a place of prayer where all pilgrims used to visit to do Tawaf (Circumambulation) of the Kabah. Allah said:

'And We command Abraham and Ismael that they should purify My house (The Kaba at Makkah) for those who are circumambulating it, or staying (I'tikaf), or bowing or prostrating themselves (there in prayer)'.[573]

The Kabah was purified by Muslims under the leadership of Muhammad (SAW). It was purified

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572 Surat Al-Ma'idah: 97

573 Surat Al-Baqarah: 125

from polytheism to the worship of Allah, the One true God. Even today, it is held pure and sacred for every Muslim on all occasions without being reserved for any one people or race.

It has been emphasised that Tawaf (going round) the Kabah, is an opportunity for a Muslim to strengthen his Faith. It is an occasion of realising some of our spiritual aspirations. Tawaf of the Kabah is considered as a sacred act of worship. It is one of the Manasik (rites), pilgrims must perform during the Hajj or Umrah. It is included among the rites as pointing to one of the highest of Muslim virtues. This is signified in the words of Allah:

'Then let them complete the prescribed duties for them, and perform their vows, and circumambulate the Ancient House (the Kaba at Makkah)'.[574]

There are four kinds of Tawaf: (a) Tawaf Al-Qudum (this is performed when one arrives at Makkah), (B) Tawaf Al-Ifadah (This is carried out when one returns from Minah), (c) Tawaf Al Wida (This is performed when one decides to farewell and has finished all Hajj rites) and (d) Tawaf At-Tatawwu (This is voluntary Circumambulation of the Kabah, performed during the stay of a person at Makkah).

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[574] Surat Al-Hajj: 29

When performing Tawaf of the Kabah one must begin with right shoulder uncovered and the Kabah on his/her left side, and saying: 'In the name of Allah, Allah is the greatest'. It is recommended to touch or kiss the Black Stone if possible. This is signified in the Hadeeth narrated by Abis bin Rabi'a (RA): Umar (RA) came near the Black Stone and kissed it and said: "No doubt, I know that you are a stone and can neither harm anyone nor benefit anyone. Had I not seen Allah's Messenger (SAW) kissing you I would not have kissed you".[575]

It is also recommended to start from the Black Stone on reaching Makkah in the first round of Tawaf of the Kabah. This is signified in the Hadeeth narrated by Ibn Umar (RAHM): "I saw Allah's Messenger (SAW) arriving at Makkah, he kissed the Black Stone Corner first while doing Tawaf". He also reported, "I have never missed the touching of these two corners of Kabah (the Black Stone and the Yemeni Corner) both in the presence and the absence of the crowds, since I saw the Prophet (SAW) touching them".[576] Making remembrance of Allah and supplicating to Him as much as possible is also encouraged. Upon reaching the Yemeni Corner Allah's Messenger (SAW) used to say:

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[575] Al-Bukhari

[576] Al-Bukhari

"Our Lord! Grant us good in this world and good in the Hereafter and save us from the punishment of the Hell-Fire".
One must complete seven rounds of the Kabah following the Sunnah of the Prophet (SAW). For further information see Fiqh us-Sunnah.

O Allah! Give piety to my soul and purify it, You are the One who purifies it. You are the Guardian of my soul. O Allah! Forgive us and have mercy upon us, pardon our sins; You are the Most Honoured and Dignified.

3.10. Purification or Cleanliness

Every Muslim should be clean and pure from all sins. Purification covers so many terms; purification of garments and all parts of the body from all dirt and hearts from disbelief and hypocrisy. Purification can be divided into physical cleanliness, which includes body, place and clothes and spiritual, which includes soul, heart and mind. The superiority of purification has been mentioned in many Ayats in the Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet (SAW). Allah has commanded our Prophet (SAW) to keep his garments free from stain. He said:

'And your garments purify!'.[577]

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577 Surat Al-Muddathir: 4

The Prophet (SAW) has considered purification as half of the Iman (Faith). Narrated Abu Malik Al-Asha'ri (RA), Allah's Messenger (SAW) said: *"Purification is half the Iman".*[578]

Purity and cleanliness of body is required, especially at the time of Salah. It is also emphasised after ritual impurity arises from sex pollution. This is indicated in the words of Allah:

'O you who believe! When you intend to offer As-Salah (the prayer), wash your faces and your hands (forearms) up to the elbows, rub (by passing wet hands over) your heads, and (wash) your feet up to ankles. If you are in a state of Janâba (i.e. had a sexual discharge), purify yourself (bathe your whole body)'.[579]

Similarly, Allah has commanded Ibrahim (AS) to purify His House (the Kaba) as a place of worship. He said:

'And (remember) when We showed Ibrâhim (Abraham) the site of the (Sacred) House (the Ka'bah at Makkah) (saying): "Associate not anything (in worship) with Me,(Lâ ilaha ill-Allah: none has the right to be worshipped but Allah), and sanctify My House for those who

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[578] Muslim

[579] Surat Al-Ma'idah: 6

circumambulate it, and those who stand up for prayer, and those who bow (submit themselves with humility and obedience to Allah), and make prostration (in prayer, etc.)".[580]

There are several significant merits for purification. For instance, Allah the Most High loves those who keep themselves pure and clean. This is indicated in Allah's words:

'Truly, Allah loves those who turn unto Him in repentance and loves those who purify themselves (by taking a bath and cleaning and washing thoroughly their private parts, bodies, for their prayers, etc.)'.[581]

Similarly, Allah praised those who keep themselves clean and pure free from all types of dirt and evil. He said:

'In it are men who love to clean and to purify themselves. And Allah loves those who make themselves clean and pure'.[582]

The true Muslim must be pure in body, mind and heart. His motives should always be sincere. Abu Hurairah (RA) said: I heard the Prophet (SAW)

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[580] Surat Al-Hajj: 26

[581] Surat Al-Baqarah: 222

[582] Surat At-Tauba: 108

saying: *"On the day of Resurrection, my followers will be called Al-Ghurr-ul-Muhajjalun from the traces of ablution and whoever can increase the area of his radiance should do so (i.e. by performing ablution in the most perfect manner)".*[583]

O Allah! Make us from those who repent and who keep themselves clean and pure. O Allah! Purify our hearts from hypocrisy and our deeds from showing off and our tongues from lies and our eyes from dishonesty.

3.11. Establishment of prayers on Lialatul Qadr (the Night of Decree)

The month of Ramadan is one of the most sacred months for the Muslims for many reasons. One of the underlined reasons is that it heralds the anniversary of the revelation of the Holy Qur'an. Allah the Most High Said:

'The month of Ramadan in which was revealed the Qur'an, a guidance for mankind and clear proofs for the guidance and the criterion (between right and wrong)'.[584]

Allah, through His infinite Mercy, has also blessed the Muslims in this Holy month with a night by

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[583] Al-Bukhari

[584] Surat Al-Baqarah: 185

which they can attain the rewards of a thousand months. This night is called Lialatul Qadr (the night of decree), which has been gifted to the nation of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) . Allah Himself speaks about this in the Holy Qur'an

'Verily! We have sent it (this Qur'an) down in the night of Al-Qadr (Decree). And what will make you know what the night of Decree is? The night of Al-Qadr (Decree) is better than a thousand months (i.e. worshipping Allah in that night is better than worshipping Him a thousand months. Therein descend the angels and the Ruh (Gabriel) by Allah's Permission with all Decrees, Peace! (All that night, there is Peace and Goodness from Allah to His believing slaves) until the appearance of Dawn'.[585]

It is called the night of decree because all matters (death, provisions, calamities, etc.) for the whole (coming) years had been decreed by Allah. Allah said:

'We sent it (this Qur'an) down on a blessed night (the night of Qadr in the month of Ramadan).Verily, We are ever warning (mankind that Our Torment will reach those who disbelieve in Our Oneness of Lordship

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[585] Surat Al-Qadr: 1-5

and in our Oneness of worship). Therein (that night) is decreed every matter of ordainments'.[586]

Allah alone has the knowledge about exactly which night is the night of Qadr. However, Muslims search for this blessed night (night of Qadr) in the month of Ramadan. It has been narrated on the authority of Aisha (RA): Allah's Messenger (SAW) said: *"Search for the night of Qadr in the odd nights of the last ten nights of Ramadan".*[587]

On this night, Gabriel (AS) descends to the earth with a group of Angels, reciting peace and praying for blessings for those they see in worship and praise of Allah. This is a night of peace. All the night, Blessings, Mercy and Goodness from Allah descend to His Believing slaves right until the break of day. Establishing prayers in the night of Decree is considered as a part of Faith. This is indicated in the Hadeeth narrated by Abu Hurairah (RA): Allah's Messenger (SAW) said: *"Whoever establishes prayers on the night of Qadr out of sincere Faith and hoping to attain Allah's Rewards (not to show off) then all his past sins will be forgiven.".*[588]

Hence, Muslims should endeavour to maximise

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586 Surat Ad-Dukhan: 1-4

587 Al-Bukhari

588 Al-Bukhari

their efforts, and indulge in different forms of good deeds in every night of Ramadan in particular the last ones. Our Prophet (SAW) maximised all forms of worships in the last ten nights of Ramadan to gain full rewards of this blessed night.

It is also the night wherein Muslims should supplicate to Allah for all the goods of this world and the hereafter. They supplicate for themselves, family, friends and the entire Muslim world. It has been narrated on the authority of Aisha (RA), she asked the Prophet (SAW) about what she should recite if she happens to find this blessed night. The Prophet (SAW) told her that she should recite the following supplication:

We pray and hope that Allah enables us to make use of this night. O Allah! We beg of You not to deprive us of this blessed night and not to include us amongst the unfortunate. O Allah! Indeed you are oft forgiving, you love forgiveness, so forgive us.

3.12. Covering Al-Aurah (the part of the body, which is illegal to expose to others)

Muslims male and female have been commanded to cover their Aurah. It is one of the signs of Allah that he has made for us garments to cover ourselves (from being in a naked state) and protect

us from all sorts of environmental factors (e.g. heat, cold, etc.). The best clothing or garments we could have come from righteousness, which covers the nakedness of sin and adorns us with virtues. Allah the Most High said:

'O Children of Adam! We have bestowed raiment upon you to cover yourselves (screen your private parts, etc.) and as an adornment, and the raiment of righteousness, that is better. Such are among the Ayât (proofs, evidences, Ayats, lessons, signs, revelations, etc.) of Allah, which they may remember'.[589]

It is obligatory to wear clothes while praying. And the statement of Allah 'take your adornment (by wearing your clean clothes) covering completely the 'Aurah': which means: while praying, a male must cover himself with clothes from the umbilicus of his abdomen up to his knees, and it is better that both his shoulders should be covered. And a female must cover all her body except face and hands while praying and whilst in public. Narrated Aishah (RA): "Allah's Messenger (SAW) used to offer the Fajr prayer and some believing women covered with their veiling sheets used to attend the Fajr prayer with him, and then they would return to their homes unrecognised".[590]

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[589] Surat Al-Araf: 26

[590] Al-Bukhari

For Muslim women they are also ordered to draw their veils all over their bodies and not to reveal their adornment. Allah said:

'O Prophet! Tell your wives and your daughters and the women of the believers to draw their veils all over their bodies (Screen themselves completely except the eyes to see the way). That will be better, that they should be known (as free respectable women) so as not to be annoyed. And Allah is Ever Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful'.[591]

Narrated Aisha (RA): "May Allah bestow His Mercy on the early emigrant women. When Allah revealed: 'And to draw their veils all over Juyubihinna (i.e. their bodies, faces, necks, and bosoms)' - they tore their Muruts (a woollen dress, or a waist-binding cloth or an apron) and covered their heads and faces with those torn Muruts". Narrated Safiyah (RA), Aishah used to say 'when the Ayat: "'And to draw their veils all over Juyubihinna (i.e. their bodies, faces, necks, and bosoms)'was revealed, (the ladies) cut their waist sheets at the edges and covered their heads and faces with those cut pieces of cloth"'.[592]

We have been instructed by the Messenger of

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[591] Surat Al-Ahzab: 59

[592] Al-Bukhari

Allah (SAW) to adopt moderation in dress. We must be presentable by setting our clothes in order that we can look graceful. We have also been taught manners of wearing new dress. Abu Sa'id Al-Khudri (RA) reported that Allah's Messenger (SAW): "Forbade Ishtimal as-Samma' (wrapping one's body with a garment so that one cannot raise its end or take one's hand out of it). He also forbade Al-Ihtiba (sitting on buttocks with knees close to abdomen and feet apart with the hands circling the knees) while wrapping oneself with a single garment, without having a part of it over the private parts".[593]

Although we are commanded to cover ourselves with clothes, it is important to note that trailing of the lower garment is undesirable. It is desirable for the garment to be wide enough and not tight so that any part of the Aurah will not be disclosed. We have been informed that the part of a lower garment, which goes below the ankles, is condemned by the Prophet (SAW). It is narrated on the authority of Ibn Umar (RAHM): Allah's Messenger said: *"Whosoever allows his lower garment to flow out of vanity, will find that Allah will not look at him on the Day of Resurrection"*.[594]

Abu Dhar (RA) reported that he heard the

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[593] Al-Bukhari

[594] Al-Bukhari

Messenger of Allah (SAW) as saying:
"There are three to whom Allah will neither speak on the Day of Resurrection, nor will He look at them nor purify them. They will be tormented severely. When he repeated this statement thrice, Abu Dhar said: They are doomed and destroyed! He asked: Who are they Messenger of Allah? He said: one who trails his lower garment arrogantly, one who boasts of kindness shown to another and one who promotes sale of his business by taking false oaths".[595]

We have also been informed that wearing silk for the male is not allowed. It is narrated on the authority of Umar bin Khatab (RA), Allah's Messenger (SAW) said: *"Do not wear silk because he who puts on silk dress in this life shall have no share in it in the Hereafter".*[596]

It is required to recite this Dua when wearing a new dress. Narrated Abu Sa'id Al-Khudri (RA), When Allah's Messenger wore a new garment; he would name it and would supplicate:
"O Allah, all the praise is for You that You have given it to me to put on. I ask You its goodness and the goodness of the purpose for which it was made, and I seek Your Protection from its evil and the evil of the purpose for which it was made".[597]

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[595] Muslim

[596] Al-Bukhari and Muslim

[597] Abu Dawud and At-Tirmidhi

Hence we can understand the significance of covering our bodies and we are aware of the type of clothes that we are allowed to wear, therefore each and every Muslim should obey and act upon the teachings of his Messenger Muhammad (SAW).

O Allah! We beg you to cover our Aurah (screen your private parts, etc.), secure us from any fear and guard us from any evil. O Allah bestow on us the raiment of righteousness.

3.13. Al-Jihad (Holy war-fighting for Allah's Cause)

The term Jihad covers many forms but according to the language of religion, it means whoever is engaged physically, spiritually or mentally or spending wealth in the service of Islam to please Allah. Jihad is considered of utmost importance in Islam and is one of its pillars (on which it stands). The fact that Jihad is considered as a part of Faith has been signified in the words of Allah and His Messenger (SAW). Allah said:

'Jihad (holy fighting in Allah's Cause) is ordained for you (Muslims) though you dislike it, and it may be that you dislike a thing which is good for you and that you like a thing which is bad for you. Allah knows but

you do not know'.[598]

To fight in the cause of truth, justice, honour and freedom is one of the highest forms of a Muslim's duty. Those who sacrificed their lives in the Cause of Allah are so much preferred in the sight of Allah that He the Most High has stated:

'And whosoever obeys Allah and the Messenger (Muhammad (SAW)), then they will be in the company of those on whom Allah has bestowed His Grace, of the Prophets, the Siddiqûn (those followers of the Prophets who were first and foremost to believe in them, like Abu Bakr As-Siddiq), the martyrs, and the righteous. And how excellent these companions are!'.[599]

Allah has guaranteed forgiveness for those who are killed in jihad: He said:

'And if you are killed or die in the Way of Allah, forgiveness and mercy from Allah are far better than all that they amass (of worldly wealth)'.[600]

Allah also promised to admit in Paradise those

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[598] Surat Al-Baqarah: 216

[599] Surat An-Nisa: 69

[600] Surat Al-Imran: 157

who fought in His Cause. He has stated:

'Those who believed (in the Oneness of Allah - Islamic Monotheism) and emigrated and strove hard and fought in Allah's Cause with their wealth and their lives are far higher in degree with Allah. They are the successful'.[601]

It is because of this honour that the martyrs' deeds are forever lasting. As Allah has stated:

'But those who are killed in the Way of Allah, He will never let their deeds be lost'.[602]

The supreme form of Jihad is to sacrifice one's life in the defence of Islam against aggression and oppression. This is called the shahada (martyrdom), which means those believers who gave their lives in jihad. Jabir (RA) narrated that a person asked "O Prophet of Allah which is the best jihad?". The Prophet (SAW) said: *'The best of jihad is that the legs of your horse be severed and your blood be spilt'.*[603]

This is an indication of sacrificing wealth and health in the Cause of Allah. Narrated Abu Hurairah (RA), the Prophet (SAW) said:

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[601] Surat At-Taubah: 20

[602] Surat Muhammad (SAW): 4

[603] Al-Bukhari

"Whoever believes in Allah and His Messenger, performs Salah (prayers) and observes Saum (fasts) during the month of Ramadan, then it will be a promise binding upon Allah to admit him to Paradise, no matter whether he fights in Allah's cause or remain in the land where he is born.". The people said 'O Allah's Messenger! Shall we acquaint the people with this good news?'. He said: "Paradise has one hundred grades which Allah has reserved for the martyrs who fight in His Cause, and the distance between each of two grades is like the distance between the heaven and the earth. So, when, you ask Allah (for something), ask for Al-Firdaus which is the middle and highest part of Paradise".[604]

Al-jihad should be devoted to please Allah and Allah Alone and not for personal interest or glory and not to oppress or suppress other people, Muslims or non-Muslims. By jihad Islam is established, Allah's Word is made superior (His Word being La ilaha illallah which means none has the right to be worshipped but Allah), and His religion (Islam) is propagated. Abu Hurairah (RA) narrated: The Prophet (SAW) said:

"Allah assigns for a person who participates (in holy battles) in Allah's Cause, and nothing causes him to do so except belief in Allah and in His Messenger, that he will be recompensed by Allah either with a reward, or booty (if he survives) or will be admitted to Paradise (if he is killed

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[604] Al-Bukhari

in the battle as a martyr)". The Prophet added: *'Had I not found it difficult for my followers, then I would not remain behind any Sariya (an army-unit) going for Jihad and I would have loved to be martyred in Allah's Cause and then made alive, and then again martyred in His cause".*[605]

The respect and honour of the martyrs is such that it has been prohibited to call them dead. Allah said:

'And say not of those who are killed in the Way of Allah, "They are dead." Nay, they are living, but you perceive (it) not'.[606]

Or even to think that they are dead is wrong. Allah the Most High stated:

'Think not of those who are killed in the Way of Allah as dead. Nay, they are alive, with their Lord, and they have provision'.[607]

Fighting in the cause of Allah can be with the:

- Heart (intentions or feelings)
- Hand (weapons, charitable deeds, etc.)
- Tongue (speeches, etc.)

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[605] Al-Bukhari)

[606] Surat Al-Baqarah: 154

[607] Surat Ali-Imran: 169

Jihad is an obligatory duty in Islam on every Muslim, and he who tries to escape from this duty, or does not in his innermost heart wish to fulfil this duty, dies with one of the qualities of a hypocrite. Narrated Abdullah bin Mas'ud (RA), I asked Allah's Messenger (SAW): "O Allah's Messenger! What is the best deed?" He replied, *'To offer the Salah (prayers) at their early fixed stated times'*. I asked: "What is next in goodness?" He replied: *'To be good and dutiful to your parents'*, I asked: "What is next in goodness?" He replied: *'To participate in jihad in Allah's Cause'*".[608]

It has also been narrated on the authority of Abu Sa'id Al-Khudri (RA), someone asked the Messenger of Allah (SAW): Who is the best of men? He answered: *'A believer who strives in the Cause of Allah with his life and his property'*. The man asked: who is the next after him? He said: *'One who retires into a narrow valley and worships his Lord'*.[609]

Our Prophet Muhammad (SAW) who was sent by Allah as a mercy for all mankind and Jinns has been commanded by Allah to fight against those who ascribe partners with Him. He fought for Allah's cause with all his power and ability - many companions who believed in him, and, honoured him, helped him and fought in the cause of Allah

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[608] Al-Bukhari

[609] Muslim

with their properties and their lives, they were the supreme conquerors and the masters. The Prophet (SAW) carried on inviting people to Allah for 13 years in spite of the harm and injuries (which he suffered), in order that Allah's proof be established against them and that His Promise be fulfilled to them. He motivated his companions to wish for martyrdom and used to comfort the hearts of these poor people. Narrated Abu Hurairah (RA): the Prophet (SAW) said: *"By Him in Whose Hand my soul is! Were it not for some men amongst the believers who dislike to be left behind me, and whom I cannot provide with means of conveyance, I would certainly never remain behind any Sariya (army unit) going out for jihad in Allah's Cause".*[610]

We have been informed that Paradise is under the blades of swords. Narrated Abdullah bin Abi Auf (RA), Allah's Messenger (SAW) said: *"Know that Paradise is under the shades of swords (Jihad in Allah's Cause)".*[611]

Al-Mughirah bin Shubah (RA) said: Our Prophet (SAW) told us about the Message of our Lord that *"Whoever amongst us is killed (in jihad in Allah's Cause) will go to Paradise".* Umar (RA) asked the Prophet (SAW): "Is it not true that our men who are killed (in jihad in Allah's Cause) will go to Paradise and

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[610] Al-Bukhari

[611] Al-Bukhari

their's (i.e. those of the pagan's) will go to the (Hell) Fire?" The Prophet (SAW) said: *"Yes".*[612]

When a deal is struck between humans concerning any affair or business each person gives something and gains something. In the divine deal of Allah with man, Allah takes man's soul and gives him in return Paradise. Narrated Abu Hurairah (RA), Allah's Messenger (SAW) said:

"Allah guarantees him who strives in His Cause and whose motivation for going out is nothing but Jihad in His Cause and belief in His Words, that He will admit him into Paradise (if martyred) or bring him back to his dwelling place with what he gains of reward or booty".[613]

A person, who offers his soul for Allah's Cause and gives up the temporary things of this world and dies in the Cause of Allah, definitely will gain eternal salvation. We are told that this divine principle is not only in Islam (Qur'an), but also of the earlier Revelations, - The original Torah of Moses and the original Injeel of Jesus. Allah said:

'Verily, Allah has purchased of the believers their lives and their properties; for the price that theirs shall be Paradise. They fight in Allah's Cause, so they kill (others) and are

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612 Al-Bukhari

613 Al-Bukhari

killed. It is a promise in truth, which is binding, on Him in the Taurât (Torah) and the Injeel (Gospel) and the Qur'an. And who is truer to his covenant than Allah? Then rejoice in the bargain, which you have concluded. That is the supreme success'.[614]

Narrated Jabir bin Abdullah (RAm), on the day of the battle of Uhud, a man came to the Prophet (SAW) and said: 'Can you tell me where I will be if I should get martyred?'. The Prophet (SAW) replied: *"In Paradise"*. The man threw away some dates he was carrying in his hand, and fought till he was martyred'.[615]

By abandoning jihad (May Allah protect us from that) i.e. defending the Muslim nation from aggression, oppression and humiliation, Islam will be destroyed and the Muslims will fall into an inferior position; their honour will be lost, their lands will be stolen, their rule and authority will vanish. Narrated Ibn Umar (RAHM): I heard Allah's Messenger (SAW) saying:

"If you (1) practise Bai Al-Inah (the Inah transaction i.e. selling goods to a person for a certain price and then buying them back from him for a far less price); (2) follow the tails of the cows (i.e. indulge in agriculture and became

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614 Surat At-Taubah: 111

615 Al-Bukhari

content with it); (3)and desert the Jihad (holy fighting) in Allah's Cause, Allah will cover you with humiliation and it will not be removed till you return back to your religion".[616]

Indeed, the words of the Prophet (SAW) served as a warning to the Muslim nation for a future, which has been realised. He informed us of the dangers of abandoning jihad.

In general, Islam is the religion of peace, kindness, friendliness and mutual understanding. However, it will not accept oppression, intimidation and humiliation. Muslims consider defence of honour, justice, religion and freedom sacred. They believe in bravery, discipline and compliance. They are ready to strive faithfully in Allah's Cause by all means (physical, intellectual and spiritual) for the establishment of truth, virtue and justice. May Allah strengthen our Faith and give us the ability to strive in His Cause to attain justice, peace and happiness in this life and Paradise in the Hereafter.

3.14. Ada' Al-Khumus (Paying one-fifth of the war booty to be given in Allah's Cause)

It has already been mentioned that Jihad (Fighting in the Cause of Allah) is a part of Faith. Jihad has been ordained to stop persecution and religion

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[616] Abu Dawud

becomes Allah's in its entirety. To strengthen the Faith of Muslim fighters and to motivate them to fight sincerely and never think of worldly provisions, Allah set criteria for distributing the booty of war. This has made them really fight only for Allah's Cause with their wealth and their lives. They have believed that they have more abundant and richer gifts to think of in the Hereafter. This has been pointed out in Allah's words:

'And know that whatever of war-booty that you may gain, verily one-fifth (1/5th) of it is assigned to Allah, and to the Messenger, and to the near relatives [of the Messenger (Muhammad (SAW))], (and also) the orphans, Al-Masâkin (the poor) and the wayfarer, if you have believed in Allah and in that which We sent down to Our slave (Muhammad (SAW)) on the Day of criterion (between right and wrong), the Day when the two forces met (the battle of Badr) - And Allah is Able to do all things'.[617]

The above Ayat indicates that out of all the booty that Muslims may acquire in war, a fifth share is set for Allah and the Prophet, and for charitable purposes for those to whom charity is due. The rest should be divided among the forces. To believe in this and to act about it is a part of

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[617] Surat Al-Anfal: 41

Faith. This is indicated in the long Hadeeth narrated by Ibn Abbas (RA) when the Prophet (SAW) explained the concept of 'to believe in Allah' he (SAW) mentioned that *'paying Al-Khumus (one-fifth of the war booty to be given in Allah's Cause), is a part of believing in Allah'*.[618]

The booty has been made legal for Muslims, however we are commanded to spend Allah's wealth rightly and distribute it equally. The leader is obliged to give the booty as he is ordered and we have to accept the distribution of it without dispute. This is signified in the Hadeeth narrated by Abu Hurairah (RA), Allah's Messenger (SAW) said: *"Neither do I give you (anything) nor withhold (anything) from you, but I am just a distributor and I give as I am ordered (by Allah)"*.[619]

The lesson we can get from this Hadeeth is that justice forms the basic requirement in distributing Allah's Wealth. Narrated Jabir bin Abdullah (RA), while Allah's Messenger (SAW) was distributing the booty at Al-Ji'ranah (name of the place) somebody said to him: "Be just (in your distribution)". The Prophet (SAW) replied: *"Verily I would be miserable if I did not act Justly"*.[620] On the other hand, people who are responsible for Allah's wealth are

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618 Al-Bukhari

619 Al-Bukhari

620 Al-Bukhari

severely warned against acting unjustly when distributing war booty. This is indicated in the Hadeeth narrated by Khaula Al-Ansariyah (RA): I heard Allah's Messenger (SAW) saying: *"Some people spend Allah's Wealth (i.e. Muslim's wealth) in an unjust manner, such people will be put in the (Hell) Fire on the Day of Resurrection".*[621]

We have been told that to enjoy what is taken in war is permissible, however it should meet Allah's Law. Allah offers comfort to those who have left their homes in His Cause, and sympathised with them by offering them some worldly advantage (i.e. to have a share from the booty). This is signified in Allah's words:

'So enjoy what you have gotten of booty in war, lawful and good, and be afraid of Allah. Certainly, Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful'.[622]

This Ayat clearly indicates the special reward of those who sacrifice their own lives and wealth in Allah's Cause. Besides the gains they acquire in war, they will be forgiven and obtain Allah's Pleasure. What we have to remember is that Jihad is not for personal gain or booty, it is hard striving of self and wealth in war and peace, in Allah's

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[621] Al-Bukhari

[622] Surat Al-Anfal: 69

Cause.

O Allah! We seek refuge in You against the declining of Your Favours, passing of safety, the suddenness of Your punishment and all that which displeases You.

3.15. To offer funeral prayer and to accompany the funeral procession (up to the place of burial)

Death is certain and wherever we are, death will find us even if we are in towers built up strong and high. Allah said:

'Whosesoever you may be, death will overtake you even if you are in fortresses built up strong and high!'.[623]

Allah causes death and He gives life and to Him we will return. Death is the gateway between this life and the next world. No one is exempted from death. This is signified in Allah's words:

'Verily, you (O Muhammad (SAW)) will die and verily, they (too) will die. Then, on the Day of Resurrection, you will be disputing before your Lord'.[624]

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[623] Surat An-Nisa: 78

[624] Surat Az-Zumar: 30-31

Mankind has been created and must be tested in this life. This is indicated in the words of Allah:

'Who has created death and life, that He may test you which of you is best in deed. And He is the All-Mighty, the Oft-Forgiving'.[625]

Creation, therefore, is not without purpose. Unlike animals, human beings have been given the gift of certain faculties of receiving instructions and of intellectual and spiritual insight. That is why we have been ordered to respect the deceased and honour the dead person from the moment of death until interment. It is required to wash the body of the deceased person with water and Sidr, to shroud him/her in white cloth and then to offer funeral prayer. It is Allah's Grace and Mercy on His slaves that He decreed prayer to the dead, so that the deceased benefits from the supplication and mediation of the congregation as the Prophet (SAW) said: *"A deceased who is prayed upon and interceded for by a forty Muslim congregation, will get intercession"*.[626]

There is an agreement among Muslim scholars that a funeral prayer for a deceased person is Fard Kifayah (Collective duty). It becomes compulsory for each individual Fard Ain (Individual duty)

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[625] Surat Al-Mulk: 2

[626] Muslim

when the numbers of people are not sufficient to accomplish this divine duty. A person who offers funeral prayer must fulfil all prerequisite conditions as for the compulsory prayers. For a valid funeral prayer certain requirements must be accomplished, and failure to meet any of these may invalidate the prayer. (See Fiqh us-Sunnah). We have been told that the basic element for funeral prayer is supplication for the deceased. Therefore, we have to pray sincerely for the deceased using the supplications reported from the Prophet (SAW).

Furthermore, we have been commanded to accompany the funeral procession up to the place of burial. This is considered as a part of Faith. Narrated Abu Hurairah (RA): Allah's Messenger (SAW) said: *"A believer who accompanies the funeral procession of a Muslim out of sincere faith and hoping to attain Allah's Reward and remains with it till the funeral prayer is offered and the burial ceremonies are over, he will return with a reward of two Qirat (a measure of 1/16th of a dirham). Each Qirat is like the size of the (mount) Uhud. He, who offers the funeral prayer only and return before the burial, will return with the reward of one Qirat only".*[627]

To offer the prayer for the deceased and to accompany funeral processions (up to the place

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627 Al-Bukhari

of burial) strengthens the ties of Faith and build up moral social values in the community. That is why our Prophet (SAW) has commanded us to follow the funeral procession and remain with it until the body is buried. Narrated Abu Sa'id Al-Khuduri (RA): the Prophet (SAW) said: *"Visit the sick and follow the funeral procession, for it will remind you of the Hereafter".*[628]

To accompany the funeral processions (up to the place of burial) is an act of worship, which is strongly ordained by the Prophet (SAW). He (SAW) has considered it as one of the rights or duties of a Muslim upon his Muslim brother. Narrated Al-Bara bin Azib (RA), Allah's Messenger (SAW) ordered us to do seven things and forbade us from doing seven other things. He ordered us to: *"Follow the funeral procession, visit the sick, accept invitation, help the oppressed, fulfil oaths, return greetings and respond to a sneezer. He forbade us to use silver utensils and dishes, to wear golden rings, silk clothes, Dibaj (pure silk cloth), Qassi and Istabraq (two kinds of silk cloths)".*[629]

According to the Sunnah it is desirable to go all round the coffin while carrying it. This is indicated in the saying of Ibn Mas'ud (RA) "If one walks in a funeral procession and carries the

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[628] Ahmed

[629] Al-Bukhari

coffin, one should do so from all the sides of the coffin, for this is a Sunnah of the Prophet (SAW)".[630]

After the burial, it is desirable to pray for forgiveness of the deceased because at this time he/she is being questioned. This is indicated in the Hadeeth narrated by Uthman (RA): "After burial the Prophet (SAW) would stand by the grave of the deceased and say: *'Seek forgiveness for your brother and pray for his acceptance, because he is now being questioned about his life'*.[631]

It is also desirable to offer condolences to the entire family or relatives of the diseased. Condolence should be performed basically to comfort the distressed members of the deceased, to encourage them to be patient and to lighten their grief and misfortune. It is preferable to use the wording as reported in the Sunnah of the Prophet (SAW). The wording of condolence could be for instance: *"May Allah increase your reward, give you the best consolation, and forgive your deceased beloved"*.[632]

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[630] Ibn Majah and Abu Dawud. For the burial processes and etiquettes, which should be adopted at the cemetery, see Fiqh us-Sunnah

[631] Abu Dawud

[632] For further information regarding condolences see Fiqh

It is also from the Sunnah to prepare food for the family of the deceased. Narrated Abdullah Ibn Ja'far (RA), Allah's Messenger (SAW) said: *"Prepare some food for the family of Ja'far, for what has befallen them is keeping them preoccupied".*[633]

These divine practices provide the deceased's family with moral and physical support, They also bring friends and neighbours closer to each other.

O Allah! Forgive all the deceased Muslims, have mercy on them and grant them Paradise. O Allah! Let us survive as believers and die Muslims, forgive the believers and the Muslims, dead or alive.

3.16. Itqu Raqabah (Freeing a neck)

Islam calls upon us to assist each other in good things. We are commanded to co-operate with one another in righteousness and piety. This is signified in Allah's words:

'Help you one another in Al-Birr and At-Taqwa (virtue, righteousness and piety); but do not help one another in sin and transgression'.[634]

The believers, men and women, are protectors of

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[633] Abu Dawud

[634] Al-Ma'idah: 2

one another. Allah said:

'The believers, men and women, are Auliyâ' (helpers, supporters, friends, protectors) of one another'.[635]

In this respect, we are commanded to assist each other particularly in liberating our fellow-Muslims who need our help. In addition to aiding a fellow-Muslim suffering a financial difficulty, we are instructed to arrange for the release of a person who is caught up in a false case or is in a prison undertaking jail sentence. This is signified in the Hadeeth narrated by Abu Musa (RA), Allah's Messenger (SAW) said: *"Visit the sick, feed the hungry, and release the captive".*[636]

Our Prophet (SAW) devoted himself and strove hard in Allah's Cause to free Makkah the sacred city from all types of Shirk. He (SAW) purified Makkah from all idols and abhorrence, re-established the worship of Allah Alone. He restored by the Grace of Allah the liberty of the slave. He (SAW) condemned slavery and encouraged his companions to free slaves by highlighting the merits of doing so.

Therefore, freeing a bondman becomes a part of

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635 Surat At-Taubah: 71

636 Al-Bukhari

Faith and indicates the true path of virtue. Allah said:

'But he has made no effort to pass on the path that is steep. And what will make you know the path that is steep. It is Freeing a neck (slave, etc.)'.[637]

To give a slave his freedom becomes one of the actions that expiate sins. Abu Hurairah (RA) narrated: The Prophet (SAW) said:

"Whoever frees a Muslim slave, Allah will save all the parts of his body from the Hell Fire, as he has freed the body-parts of the slave".[638]

Narrated Abu Dhar (RA): I asked Allah's Messenger (SAW) which action is most excellent? He replied: *"Faith in Allah and striving in His Path".* Then I asked: Which slaves are most excellent? He replied: *"Those whose value is higher and who are held in high esteem by their people".*[639]

O Allah! Save our necks from Hell-Fire and direct us to whatever you like and accept. O Allah! Make us from those who hear the talk and follow the best of it and guide us to the straight path.

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[637] Surat Al-Balad: 11-13

[638] Al-Bukhari

[639] Al-Bukhari and Muslim

3.17. Fulfilling of the vows

When Allah describes the pious people who fear Him by avoiding evil and performing good, He said about them:

'They (are those who) fulfil (their) vows, and they fear a Day whose evil will be wide-spreading'.[640]

Fulfilling a vow is also considered a part of Faith. In the above Ayat the word 'they' refers to the righteous who fulfil all vows and contracts and prepare themselves for the Judgement to come. However vows should be in Allah's obedience. Aisha (RA) narrated: The Prophet (SAW) said: *"Whoever vows that he will be obedient to Allah, should remain obedient to Him; and whoever made a vow that he will disobey Allah should not disobey Him".*[641]

Ibn Abbas (RA) narrated that while the Prophet (SAW) was delivering a religious talk he saw a man standing in the sun, so he asked about that man. They (the people) said 'It is Abu Isra'el who has vowed that he will stand and never sit down, and he will never come in the shade, nor speak to anybody, and will fast'. The Prophet (SAW) said: *"Order him to speak and let him come in the shade, and*

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[640] Surat Al-Insan: 7

[641] Al-Bukhari

make him sit down, but let him complete his fast".[642]

If somebody dies without fulfilling a vow somebody else must fulfil it on his/her behalf. Sa'id bin Ubada (RA) narrated that he consulted the Prophet (SAW) about a vow that had been made by his mother who died without fulfilling it. The Prophet (SAW) gave his verdict that he should fulfil it on her behalf.[643]

Similarly, it is forbidden to swear in the name of anything besides Allah. A believer should not swear on forefathers or faithfulness, but he can only swear by Allah. Ibn Umar (RAm) reported that he heard a man refusing something and taking an oath by the Kabah. He admonished him: 'do not swear by any thing besides Allah' because I have heard Allah's Messenger (SAW) saying: *"He who swears by anyone but Allah is a disbeliever or a polytheist".*[644]

3.18. Iqamat Al-Hudud (Honouring the sacred Limits) set by Allah

Al-Hudud are the limits which Allah prescribed in the Qur'an or were pointed out by the Prophet (SAW). Every Muslim should honour these limits, however if somebody transgresses them, he is to

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642 Al-Bukhari

643 Al-Bukhari

be punished according to certain penalties prescribed by Allah and His Messenger (SAW). Honouring the limits set by Allah means performing all that Allah has ordained and abstaining from all kinds of sins and evil deeds, which Allah has forbidden. Allah has made the limits clear to those who understand. This is indicated in Allah's words:

'These are the limits of Allah, which He makes plain for the people who have knowledge'.[644]

Among these limits for example are laws of inheritance, issues regarding divorce, matters related to (deliberate and accidental) oaths, themes correlated with Al-Qasas (law of retribution), the subject of Dhihar (the saying of a husband to his wife: you are to me like the back of my mother i.e. unlawful for me to approach), laws associated with the rules of pilgrimage, matters linked with fasting, issues connected to the practice of adultery, drinking wine or stealing, etc. Understanding these limits and observing them is an indication of perfect Faith. Allah said:

'These are the limits (set by) Allah and whosoever obeys Allah and His Messenger (Muhammad (SAW)) will be admitted to

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[644] Surat Al-Baqarah: 129

Gardens under which rivers flow (in Paradise), to abide therein, and that will be the great success'.[645]

It should be taken into consideration that all of the limits set by Allah or His Messenger and the prescribed punishment for those who violate them are in the interests of good, clean and honourable spiritual and social lives. It has been pointed out that knowledge of the limits set by Allah is vital to every Muslim.

The fact that Iqamat Al-Hudud is a part of Faith has been prescribed in many places in the Holy Qur'an and in a number of the Hadeeths of the Prophet (SAW). Allah has described the true believers saying:

'The believers whose lives Allah has purchased are those who repent to Allah, who worship Him, who praise Him, who fast, who bow down (in prayer), who prostrate themselves (in prayer), who enjoin (people) for Al-Maruf and forbid (people) from Al-Munkar and who observe the limits set by Allah. And give glad tidings to the believers'.[646]

Allah promised glad tidings to those who observe

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[645] Surat An-Nisa: 13

[646] Surat At-Taubah: 112

the limits set by Him. Allah said:

'And whoever honours the sacred things of Allah, then that is better for him in the sight of his Lord'.[647]

Allah also said:
'And whoever honours the Symbols of Allah, then it is truly from the piety of the heart'.[648]

The Prophet has given the assurance of Paradise to every Muslim who safeguards his tongue and his sexual organs. Protection here means their use according to Allah's laws. Narrated Sahil bin Sa'd (RA), Allah's Messenger (SAW) said: *"Whoever can guarantee (the chastity of) what is between his two jaw-bones and what is between his two legs (i.e., his mouth, tongue and his private parts). I guarantee Paradise for him".*[649]

At the same time Allah has prepared Hell-Fire and humiliating punishment for those who violate these limits. He Subhanahu Wa-Ta'ala said:

'And whosoever disobeys Allah and His Messenger (Muhammad (SAW)), and transgresses His limits, He will cast him into the

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[647] Surat Al-Hajj: 30

[648] Surat Al-Hajj: 32

[649] Al-Bukhari

Fire, to abide therein; and he shall have a disgraceful torment'.[650]

Therefore we are instructed not to transgress the limits ordained by Allah or by His Messenger (SAW). Whosoever violates these limits, he is considered as a wrong doer. This is signified in Allah's words:

'These are the limits ordained by Allah, so do not transgress them. And whoever transgresses the limits ordained by Allah, then such are the Zâlimûn (wrong-doers, etc.)'.[651]

Similarly, Abu Thalaba Al-Khushani (RA) reported that Allah's Messenger (SAW) said: *"Allah the Almighty has laid down religious duties, so do not neglect them; He has set limits, so do not transgress them; He has prohibited some things, do not violate them; and about some things He was silent - out of kindness for you, not forgetfulness, so seek not after them".*[652]

This Hadeeth shows that Faith in Allah is the basis of all virtuous deeds. No act or deed is acceptable by Allah without this Faith. This means one should perform what Allah has ordained and abstain from what Allah has forbidden. By

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650 Surat An-Nisa: 13

651 Surat Al-Baqarah: 230

652 Ad-Daraqutni

honouring this one can win over Allah's Pleasure. Whosoever leads his life accordingly, will surely succeed in this life and the Hereafter.

The penalty of violating Allah's limits is severe and for a person to free himself from a disgraceful punishment, he should be subjected to certain penalties prescribed by Allah and His Messenger (SAW). Among these penalties is Kafarah (Expiation), Fidyah (Ransom), Diya (blood-money) and others. Examples of these limits and how a person can free himself if he violates them will be illustrated as follows:

In terms of violating deliberate oaths, the expiation prescribed by Allah is stated in the following Ayat:

'Allah will not punish you for what is unintentional in your oaths, but He will punish you for your deliberate oaths; for its expiation (a deliberate oath) feed ten Masâkin (poor persons), on a scale of the average of that with which you feed your own families; or clothe them; or manumit a slave. But whosoever cannot afford (that), then he should fast for three days. That is the expiation for the oaths when you have sworn. And protect your oaths (i.e. do not swear much. Thus Allah makes clear to you His Ayât (proofs, evidences, Ayats, lessons, signs, revelations, etc.), you may be

grateful'.[653]

It has been mentioned that it is better not to take oaths, but if you have taken one, and later you find a better solution for the problem, then act according to the better one and give expiation for the oath. This is supported by the Hadeeth narrated by Abu Hurairah (RA), the Prophet (SAW) said: *"We (Muslims) are the last (to come) in the world, but (will be) foremost on the Day of Resurrection. By Allah, if anyone of you insists on fulfilling an oath by which he may harm his family, he commits a sin, with Allah, greater than that of dissolving his oath and making its expiation with that which Allah has commanded".*[654]

Having once undertaken the Hajj or Umrah, we must complete them. They are symbols of our worship to Allah. However, if we could not complete any of the ceremonies ordained for any reason, a Kafarah (expiation) or Fidyah (ransom) should be offered. This has been prescribed in Allah's words:

'And perform properly (i.e. all the ceremonies according to the ways of Prophet Muhammad (SAW)), the Hajj and 'Umrah (i.e. the pilgrimage to Makkah) for Allah. But if you are prevented (from completing them), sacrifice a

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653 Surat Al-Ma'idah: 89

654 Al-Bukhari

Hady (animal, i.e. a sheep, a cow, or a camel, etc.) such as you can afford, and do not shave your heads until the Hady reaches the place of sacrifice. And whosoever of you is ill or has an ailment in his scalp (necessitating shaving), he must pay a Fidyah (ransom) of either observing Saum (fasts) (three days) or giving Sadaqah (charity - feeding six poor persons) or offering sacrifice (one sheep). Then if you are in safety and whosoever performs the 'Umrah in the months of Hajj, before (performing) the Hajj, (i.e. Hajj-at-Tamattu' and Al-Qirân), he must slaughter a Hady such as he can afford, but if he cannot afford it, he should observe Saum (fasts) three days during the Hajj and seven days after his return (to his home), making ten days in all. This is for him whose family is not present at Al-Masjid-al-Harâm (i.e. non-resident of Makkah). And fear Allah much and know that Allah is Severe in punishment'.[655]

Committing any intentional illegal action during the Hajj or Umrah needs expiation or ransom. The penalty is prescribed in many places in the Qur'an. For instance, Allah said:

'O you who believe! Kill not game while you are in a state of Ihrâm for Hajj or 'Umrah

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[655] Surat Al-Baqarah: 196

(pilgrimage), and whosoever of you kills it intentionally, the penalty is an offering, brought to the Ka'bah, of an eatable animal (i.e. sheep, goat, cow, etc.) equivalent to the one he killed, as adjudged by two just men among you; or, for expiation, he should feed Masâkin (poor persons), or its equivalent in Saum (fasting), that he may taste the heaviness (punishment) of his deed. Allah has forgiven what is past, but whosoever commits it again, Allah will take retribution from him. And Allah is All-Mighty, All-Able of Retribution'.[656]

Regarding Ad-Dhihar, it has been pointed out that it is a sin, ill word and a lie. This is indicated in Allah's words:

'Those among you who make their wives unlawful (Az-Zihâr) to them by saying to them "You are like my mother's back." They cannot be their mothers. None can be their mothers except those who gave them birth. And verily, they utter an ill word and a lie. And verily, Allah is Oft-Pardoning, Oft-Forgiving'.[657]

The expiation of Ad-Dhihar has been prescribed

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[656] Surat Al-Ma'idah: 95

[657] Surat Al-Mujadalah: 2

in the following Ayat:

'And those who make unlawful to them (their wives) (by Ad-Dhihar) and wish to free themselves from what they uttered, (the penalty) in that case (is) the freeing of a slave before they touch each other. That is an admonition to you (so that you may not return to such an ill thing). And Allah is All-Aware of what you do. 'And he who finds not (the money for freeing a slave) must fast two successive months before they both touch each other. And for him who is unable to do so, he should feed sixty of Miskîn (poor). That is in order that you may have perfect Faith in Allah and His Messenger. These are the limits set by Allah. And for disbelievers, there is a painful torment'.[658]

On the subject of drinking wine, the legal punishment was prescribed by the Prophet (SAW). Narrated Abu Salama (RA), Abu Hurairah (RA) said: "A man who drank wine was brought to the Prophet (SAW). The Prophet said: *"Beat him"*. Abu Hurairah (RA) added: "So some of us beat him with their hands, and some with their shoes, and some with their garments, and then when we finished, someone said to him: 'May Allah disgrace you!'. On that the Prophet (SAW) said: *"Do not say*

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[658] Surat Al-Mujadalah: 3-4

so, for you are helping Satan to overpower him".[659]

With reference to stealing, the legal penalty was cutting off of the hand. This is indicated in Allah's words:

'Cut off (from the wrist joint) the (right) hand of the thief, male or female, as a recompense for that which they committed, a punishment by way of example from Allah. And Allah is All-Powerful, All Wise'.[660]

Similarly, Abu Hurairah (RA) reported that the Prophet (SAW) said: *"Allah curses a thief who steals an egg and gets his hand cut off, or steals a rope and gets his hands cut off".*[661]

This punishment, which is prescribed, by Allah or his Messenger is only to keep civil society together and protect innocent people from crime. However, we have to remember that Allah not only punishes but also forgives, and Allah's forgiveness cannot be quantified. This is indicated in the words of Allah:

'But whosoever repents after his crime and does righteous good deeds (by obeying Allah),

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[659] Al-Bukhari

[660] Surat Al-Ma'idah: 38

[661] Al-Bukhari

then verily, Allah will pardon him (accept his repentance). Verily, Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful'.[662]

O Lord! Help us to observe the Hudud set by You, grant us pardon and have mercy on us. You are the Most Forgiving, the Most Compassionate.

3.19. Awakening the desire of Marriage

Marriage is considered a sacred act in Islam. In addition to its physical aspect, it has a moral and spiritual characteristic, and therefore mankind is in this respect distinguished from animals. Marriage is regarded as a part of Faith hence it has been enjoined by Allah and His Messenger (SAW). It is amongst Allah's signs. This is indicated in Allah's words:

'And among His Signs is this, that He created for you wives from among yourselves, that you may find repose in them'.[663]

Love, mercy and tranquillity are the main principles, which should be established in the relations between a man and his wife, dwelling together and bringing up righteous children. This is signified in Allah's statement:

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[662] Surat Al-Ma'idah: 39

[663] Surat Ar-Rum: 21

'And He has put between you affection and mercy. Verily, in that are indeed signs for a people who reflect'.[664]

Allah has given us the choice of marriage, provided we treat women with equality. This is clearly illustrated by His statement in the Qur'an where He said:

'And if you fear that you shall not be able to deal justly with the orphan-girls, then marry (other) women of your choice, two or three, or four but if you fear that you shall not be able to deal justly (with them), then only one or (the captives and the slaves), your right hands possess. That is nearest to prevent you from doing injustice'.[665]

The idea of not getting married and the excessive abstention from all kinds of lawful pleasures is forbidden. One cannot change his fate, which has been destined for him, unless there is a valid reason for this. It is Allah Who has established relationships of lineage and marriage. In this respect Allah said:

'And it is He Who has created man from water, and has appointed for him kindred by

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[664] Surat Ar-Rum: 21

[665] Surat An-Nisa: 3

blood, and kindred by marriage. And your Lord is Ever All-Powerful to do what He will'.[666]

Anas bin Malik (RA) narrated: A group of three men came to the houses of the wives of the Prophet (SAW) asking how the Prophet (SAW) worshiped (Allah), and when they were informed about that, they considered his worship insufficient and said: "Where are we compared to the Prophet (SAW) and his past and future sins have been forgiven". Then one of them said 'I will offer the prayer throughout the night forever'. The other said: 'I will observe fast throughout the year and will not break my fast'. The third said 'I will keep away from the women and will not marry forever'. Allah's Messenger (SAW) came to them and said: *"Are you the same people who said so-and-so? By Allah, I am more submissive to Allah and more afraid of Him than you; yet I observe fast and also do not observe fast, I do offer Salah (prayer) and also do sleep and I also marry women. So he who does not follow my Sunnah (legal ways) in religion is not from me".*[667]

We have been advised to choose wives on the basis of the criteria set by our Prophet (SAW). Narrated Abu Hurairah (RA); Allah's Messenger said: *"A woman is married for four: her wealth, her*

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666 Surat Al-Furqan: 54

667 Al-Bukhari

family status, her beauty and her religion. So you should take possession of (marry) the religious woman otherwise you will be a loser".[668]

Adopting the Sunnah of the Prophet (SAW) will definitely lead to prosperity in this world and in the Hereafter. A Muslim must make a reasonable choice of a woman. So in the moral and spiritual world, we should in all circumstances hold firmly to religion. Our duty is to find a religious woman, and if we try to do so in all sincerity of heart, Allah will give us guidance. Through a religious woman, as well as through ourselves, we may, by Allah's grace, be able to give evidence for devotion, honesty and righteousness. The Prophet's teaching is clear and unambiguous, and it is open and free to all.

We have been informed that wives may be a 'trial' in many senses: (a) their affection for you and your affection for them may be different and this may cause conflict, (b) riches and worldly matters may be a source of happiness or a source of disagreement, (c) ways of thinking may cause argument and lead to complicated problems and thus become a test of our own Faith. In this respect the Prophet (SAW) in the Hadeeth narrated by Usama bin Zaid (RA) said: *"After me I have not left*

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668 Al-Bukhari

any Fitnah (trial) more harmful to men than women".[669]

In spite of this, we are required to take care of women and treat one's family in a polite and kind manner. This is signified in the Hadeeth narrated by Abu Hurairah (RA), Allah's Messenger (SAW) said: *"Whoever believes in Allah and the Hereafter should not harm his neighbour. And I command you to take care of the women, for they are created from a rib and the most crooked portion of the rib is its upper part; if you try to straighten it, you will break it and if you leave it, it will remain crooked, so I command you to take care of the women".*[670]

We have to remember that marriage is not a joke. The relationship between a husband and a wife is divine. We have been instructed to act kindly towards women. A husband should not allow the sudden gust of a bad mood make him take quick action against his wife. In case a divorce takes place, a husband should set his wife free with kindness. A husband must not put pressure on his wife to distort her rights in any way. This is indicated in Allah's words:

'O you who believe! You are forbidden to inherit women against their will, and you should not treat them with harshness, that you

669 Al-Bukhari

670 Al-Bukhari

should not treat them with harshness, that you may take away part of the Mahr you have given them, unless they commit open illegal sexual intercourse. And live with them honourably. If you dislike them, it may be that you dislike a thing and Allah brings through it a great deal of good'.[671]

Islam stresses the importance of kind treatment to wives. A happy married life is based on the understanding of Allah's words and practising the advice of the Prophet (SAW). Abu Hurairah (RA) reported: Allah's Messenger (SAW) said: *"The believers who show the most perfect Faith are those who have the best behaviour, and the best of you are those who are the best to their wives".*[672]

Similarly, the rights of a husband concerning his wife have been emphasised in Allah's Book and the Hadeeth of the Prophet (SAW). The unique importance of the Wife's obedience to her husband has been indicated in the Hadeeth narrated by Abu Hurairah (RA), The Prophet (SAW) said: *"If I were to order anyone to prostrate himself before another, I would have ordered a woman to prostrate herself before her husband".*[673]

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671 Surat An-Nisa: 19

672 At-Tirmidhi

673 At-Tirmidhi

In this respect a wife must obey her husband as long as he does not order her to disobey Allah. If a wife stands for the responsibilities and obligations entrusted to her by Islam and also strives to keep her husband pleased and satisfied, Allah will admit her to Paradise. This is indicated in the Hadeeth narrated by Umm Salaamah ((RA), Allah's Messenger said: *"Any woman who dies while her husband is pleased with her, she will enter Paradise".*[674] Thus, both a husband and a wife should appreciate the good qualities and overlook the shortcomings of each other. They should exchange mutual understanding, respect and admiration. All kinds of harshness and cruelty are forbidden. A husband and a wife must live clean and honest lives respecting each other's personalities.

Allah has a meaning and purpose in all things, and His power is complete to carry out His purpose. Each individual is precious in the Plan of Allah and each has a purpose to fulfil. The question of sex relations should be treated seriously because it affects the lives of children and the purity and well-being of the society in which we live. Rejecting the idea of marriage and involving oneself in shameful acts (e.g. adultery or fornication) can cause social diseases and can affect the moral values within societies. Narrated Abu Hurairah (RA), The Prophet (SAW) said:

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[674] At-Tirmidhi

"When a servant of Allah commits adultery his faith departs from him and remains above his head like an umbrella; but when he abandons that act of sin his faith returns to him".[675]

In fact practising illegal sexual intercourse, which is considered a major sin, is the outcome of rejecting the idea of marriage. Abdullah ibn Masud (RA) reported: "A man asked the Prophet (SAW): 'What was the greatest sin in Allah's sight?' He replied *"That you treat anything equal to Allah, when it is Allah who created you".* What is after that? He asked. The Prophet (SAW) replied: *"That you kill your child for fear that he may eat along with you".* He asked 'What is after that? The Prophet (SAW) replied: *"That you commit adultery with your neighbour's wife".*[676]

O Allah! Bestow on us from our wives and our offspring who will be the comfort of our eyes, and give us the grace to lead the righteous.

3.20. Kind treatment towards parents

The fact that being good and dutiful to parents is a part of Faith has been signified in a number of Ayats from the Holy Book and the Hadeeth of the Prophet (SAW). Allah said:

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675 Abu Dawud and At-Tirmidhi

676 Al-Bukhari and Muslim

'And We have enjoined on man (to be dutiful and good) to his parents. His mother bore him in weakness and hardship upon weakness and hardship, and his weaning is in two years give thanks to Me and to your parents, unto Me is the final destination'.[677]

Allah has enjoined on us not to say to them a word of contempt nor repel any of them. Our affection and kindness to parents should be emphasised when one or both of them attain old age of life. We should address them in terms of honour. The spiritual and moral duties towards parents have been pointed out in Allah's words:

'And your Lord has decreed that you worship none but Him. And that you be dutiful to your parents. If one of them or both of them attain old age in your life, say not to them a word of disrespect, nor shout at them but address them in terms of honour'.[678]

We have been informed that Kindness to parents is an act of piety. We are commanded to honour them and to approach them with gentle humility and ask Allah to bestow His Mercy on them. This is indicated in Allah's words:

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[677] Surat Luqman: 14

[678] Surat Al-Isra: 23

'And lower unto them the wing of submission and humility through mercy, and say: "My Lord! Bestow on them Your Mercy as they did bring me up when I was small'.[679]

Love of parents should be to us a type of heavenly love. It is a universal moral law set by Allah. Being disrespectful and offensive to parents means breaking Allah's moral law, which deserves His punishment. This is signified in the words of Allah:

'And remember when We took a covenant from the Children of Isreal, (saying): Worship none but Allah (Alone) and be dutiful and good to parents'.[680]

Kind treatment towards parents is given further significance when it is mentioned along with Salah and Jihad which are the two most superb and praiseworthy duties of a Muslim. It is narrated on the authority of Abdullah bin Mas'ud (RA): I asked the Messenger of Allah (SAW) which of the deeds takes one nearer to Paradise? He said: *'Prayer at its proper time'*. I said: What next O Messenger of Allah? He replied: *'Kindness to parents'*. I said: What next? He relied: *'Jihad in the cause of Allah'*.[681]

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[679] Surat Al-Isra: 24

[680] Surat Al-Baqarah: 83

[681] Al-Bukhari and Muslim

We have been told that Allah's Pleasure can be obtained by serving and obeying parents. It has been reported on the authority of Abu Hurairah (RA), the Messenger of Allah (SAW) said: *"May he be disgraced, may he be disgraced; who finds his parents one or both approaching old age and does not enter Paradise by rendering services to them".*[682]

Serving patterns and being dutiful to them should be at every stage of their life, however the Prophet (SAW) has emphasised old age because this is the critical time of parents' life where they need constant care and service.

The Prophet (SAW) considered undutifulness to parents one of the biggest of the major sins for which one deserves Allah's punishment. In fact disobedience to parents is mentioned along with Shirk (polytheism). This makes evident that defiance to parents is a very serious sin. Abu Bakra Nafia bin Al-Harith (RA) reported that the Messenger of Allah (SAW) said: *'Shall I inform you of the biggest of the great sins?'* We said: O Yes Allah's Messenger. He said: *'To join partners in worship with Allah, to be undutiful to one's parents and giving a forged statement and a false witness'.*[683]

In case that one or both parents are disbelievers

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[682] Muslim

[683] Al-Bukhari and Muslim

and strive to make us disobey Allah, we are commanded not to obey them. But even here, it does not mean that we should be disrespectful. Allah ordered us to give them their rights as parents and be kind to them, even where they command things, which we should not do, and therefore disobedience becomes our highest duty. That is the way of those who love Allah and their motive is based on Allah's Law and not on self willed insolence. This is signified in Allah's words:

'But if they (both) strive with you to make you join in worship with Me others that of which you have no knowledge, then obey them not, but behave with them in the world kindly'.[684]

Asma bint Abi Bakr (RA) narrated that: 'My mother came to me while she was still a polytheist and I asked the Messenger of Allah (SAW) my mother who is ill-disposed to Islam, has come to visit me. She is aspiring for something from me. Shall I show her affection?' He replied: *"Yes, be benevolent towards your mother".*[685]

Being dutiful to parents and helping them is considered better than performing Jihad. Narrated Abdullah ibn Umar (RAHM): A person came to the Prophet (SAW) and said: "I have intentions of

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[684] Surat Luqman: 15

going on Jihad." The Prophet (SAW) asked him *'Are any of your parents still alive?'* He replied: "Yes." The Prophet (SAW) said: *'Do jihad by helping your parents'*.[686]

In addition to serving parents while they are alive, we are also commanded to do good and be nice to them even after their death. This can be accomplished by asking Allah to forgive them, by fulfilling their promises, by maintaining contact with their friends, by showing compassion to relatives and conveying the reward of other virtuous deeds for them. This is indicated in the Hadeeth narrated by Abu Usaid Malik bin Rabi'ah As-Sa'idi (RA): 'We were sitting with Allah's Messenger (SAW) when a man of Banu Salaamah came to him and asked: "O Messenger of Allah! Is there any obedience to parents left that I can show to them after their death?". He (SAW) replied: *"Yes, to pray for them, to supplicate for their forgiveness, to fulfil their promises after their death, to maintain the ties of kinship which cannot be maintained except through them, and honour their friends"*.[687]

Our Lord! Forgive me and my parents, and (all) the believers on the Day when the reckoning will be established.

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[686] Muslim

[687] Abu Dawud

3.21. Keeping ties of Kinship

The establishment of the ties of blood relationship is considered a part of Faith because it has been mentioned along with the belief in Allah. This has been signified in Allah's words and the sayings of the Prophet (SAW). For instance, Allah has commanded us to be good to relatives and not sever the bond of kinship. He said:

'And fear Allah through Whom you demand your mutual (rights), and (do not cut the relations of) the wombs (kinship). Surely, Allah is Ever an All-Watcher over you'.[688]

Severance of relations has been prohibited. We have been warned against violating the Divine commands of sustaining decent ties of kinship. Allah also said:

'Those who join that which Allah has commanded to be joined (i.e. they are good to their relatives and do not sever the bond of kinship), fear their Lord, and dread the terrible reckoning'.[689]

Jubair bin Mut'im (RA) narrated that he heard the Prophet (SAW) saying:

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[688] Surat An-Nisa: 1

[689] Surat Ar-Ra'd: 21

[685] Al-Bukhari and Muslim

"The person who severs the bond of kinship will not enter Paradise".[690]

The eminence of relatives and the outstanding importance of their rights is also mentioned in the Hadeeth narrated Abu Hurairah (RA), Allah's Messenger (SAW) said: *"He who believes in Allah and the Last Day, let him be hospitable to his guest; and he who believes in Allah and the Last Day, let him maintain good the ties of blood relationship; and he who believes in Allah and the Last Day must speak good or remain silent".*[691]

In order to attain Allah's Mercy and His pleasure, one should maintain good and kind relationship with relatives in all events and circumstances. A behaviour opposing this, is the cause of Allah's Curse and Anger. This is indicated in Allah's words:

'Would you then, if you were given the authority, do mischief in the land, and sever your ties of kinship? Such are they whom Allah has cursed, so that He has made them deaf and blinded their sight'.[692]

Narrated Abu Hurairah (RA), the Prophet (SAW)

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690 Al-Bukhari

691 Al-Bukhari and Muslim

692 Surat Muhammad (SAW): 22-23

said: *"Allah created His creation, and when He finished it, the womb got up and caught hold of Allah whereupon Allah said: 'What is the matter?' On that, it said I seek refuge with you from Al-Qati'ah (those who sever the ties of kith and kin), On that Allah said ' will you accept (be satisfied) I bestow My Favour on him who keeps your ties, and withhold My Favours from him who severs your ties'. On that it said 'Yes O my Lord! Then Allah said 'That is for you".*[693]

The Messenger of Allah (SAW) has made it absolutely clear that if relatives misbehave and sever the relations, one should make efforts to re-establish relationship with them and restore their rights. This is indicated in the Hadeeth narrated by Abdullah bin Amr bin Al-As (RA), The Prophet (SAW) said: *"The person who perfectly maintains the ties of kinship is not the one who does it because he gets recompensed by his relatives (for being kind and good to them), but the one who truly maintains the bloods of kinship is the one who persists in doing so even though the latter has severed the ties of kinship with him".*[694]

Allah has also emphasised the close relationship among kinship saying that:

'The Prophet is closer to the believers than their ownselves, and his wives are their

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[693] Al-Bukhari

[694] Al-Bukhari

(believers') mothers (as regards respect and marriage). And blood relation among each other have closer personal ties in the Decree of Allah'.[695]

Allah has also considered those who sever the ties of kinship to be the losers:

'Those who break Allah's Covenant after ratifying it, and sever what Allah has ordered to be joined (as regards Allah's Religion Islam and to practise its legal laws on the earth and also regards keeping good relations with kith and kin) and do mischief on earth, it is they who are the losers'.[696]

The one who maintains good ties with blood relations stands to gain abundant provisions from Allah and prolonged existence of life. It is reported on the authority of Anas (RA), the Messenger of Allah (SAW) said: *"He who desires that he be granted more provision and his lease of life be prolonged should treat his kith and kin with kindness".*[697]

Giving proper and considerate treatment to relatives is considered one of the actions, which comprise the means to achieve Paradise and salvation

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695 Surat Al-Ahzab: 6

696 Surat Al-Baqarah: 27

697 Al-Bukhari and Muslim

from Hell-Fire. It has been narrated on the authority of Abu Ayyub Khalid bin Zaid Al-Ansari (RA): a man came to the Messenger of Allah (SAW) and said: "Direct me to a deed which draws me near to Paradise and takes me away from the Fire". Upon this he (The Messenger of Allah) said: *'You worship Allah and never associate anything with Him, establish Prayer, and pay Az-Zakah, and do good to your kin".*[698]

We have also been informed that all types of charity either spiritual or physical should be devoted to relatives. In preaching religion for example, the priority must be given to one's own close relatives. In terms of Sadaqah, they deserve it more than any one else. This is indicated in the Hadeeth narrated by Salaaman bin Amir (RA), The Prophet (SAW) said:
"Charity towards a poor person is charity, and towards a relation is both charity and maintaining the ties (of kinship)".[699]

What should be understood is that violating the ties of kinship is one of the most serious sins. In spite of being warned seriously against severance of relations, this sin is very common in this world. We ask Allah to save us from it and help us to follow His Divine commands.

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[698] Al-Bukhari and Muslim

[699] At-Tirmidhi

3.22. Establishing the rights of the family

Being kind to family is a great act of worship. Supporting our own families and children is a duty ordained by Allah and His Messenger (SAW). It is an act of great merit. We have to support them according to our capacity with the intention that they have been entrusted to us by Allah:

'Let the rich man spend according to his means, and the man whose resources are restricted, let him spend according to what Allah has given him. Allah puts no burden on any person beyond what He has given him. Allah will grant after hardship, ease'.[700]

The Prophet (SAW) who is our example used to be the most kind to his wives. This is signified by the Hadeeth narrated by Aisha (RA): Allah's Messenger (SAW) said: *"The best amongst you is the one who is the most kind to his wife and I am the kindest amongst you to my wives"*. She has also reported that Allah's Messenger (SAW) said: *"The most perfect amongst believers in Faith is the one who is the best in manner and kindest to his wife"*.[701]

There is a great reward for him who establishes the rights of the family. We must not be

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[700] Surat At-Talaq: 7

[701] At-Tirmidhi

frightened by difficulties. We must put our trust in Allah, Who has promised to replace whatsoever we spend in His Cause.

Abu Masud (RA) narrated: The Prophet (SAW) said: *"If a man spends on his family with the intention of having a reward from Allah, sincerely for Allah's sake, then it is a (kind of) alms-giving in reward for him".*[702]

It has been narrated on the authority of Abu Hurairah (RA), the Messenger of Allah (SAW) said: *"Of the Dinar (i.e. currency unit or money) you spend as a contribution in Allah's path, or to set free a slave, or as a charity given to a needy, or to support your family, the one yielding the greatest reward is that which you spent on your family".*[703]

It is obvious that whatever a person spends seeking thereby the pleasure of Allah, will have its reward, however, the most excellent Dinar is one that a person spends on his family and he will have a great reward from Allah for this. Abu Mas'ud (RA) reported that he heard the Messenger of Allah (SAW) saying: *"When someone spends on his family seeking his reward for it from Allah, it counts to him as a charity".*[704]

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[702] Al-Bukhari

[703] Muslim

[704] Al-Bukhari and Muslim

It has been narrated on the authority of Abu Hurairah (RA), the Messenger of Allah (SAW) said: *"The upper hand is better than the lower one, and begin with those who are under your care".*[705]

It is evident that any negligence in the matter of maintenance of one's own dependents is considered as a sin. In this respect, Abdullah bin Amr bin Al-As (RAHM) reported: Allah's Messenger (SAW) said: *"Neglecting one's own dependants is a reason enough for a man to commit a sin".*[706]

Giving should be of that which a person earned and of that which is good so that Allah will reward him because Allah never accepts bad.

3.23. Promoting greetings and giving food

Promoting greetings whether a friend or a stranger is a part of Faith, and so feeding people whether poor or a friend is an act of goodness too. Both of these acts create mutual love and remove abhorrence from the hearts. This is signified by the words of Allah:

'And they give food, inspite of their love for it (or for the love of Him), to Miskin (poor), the orphan, and the captive, (Saying): "We feed

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[705] Al-Bukhari

[706] Abu Dawud

you seeking Allah's Countenance only. We wish for no reward, nor thanks from you'.[707]

Because we are all creatures of Allah, kindness and delightfulness of daily human interaction is a normal need. The form of greeting -As-Salamu Alaikum (Peace be on you i.e. may you be safe) was introduced when Prophet Adam (AS) was created. This is indicated in the Hadeeth narrated by Abu Hurairah (RA), the Prophet (SAW) said: *"When Allah created Adam (AS), He said to him: 'Go and greet that company of angels who are sitting there - and then listen to what they are going to say in reply to your greeting because that will be your greeting and your offspring's'. Adam (AS) said to the angels: '(As-Salamu Alaikum)'. They replied: 'As-Salamu Alaikum wa Rahmatullah (May you be safe and Mercy of Allah be upon you)'".*[708]

The term 'Salaam' which is translated as 'Peace' has broad significant shades of implications. It includes a sense of security and safety. It entails a feeling of salvation, relief and safeguarding. It also involves the supreme spiritual sense of the term purity of motives, in addition to the ordinary meaning of peace i.e. freedom from evil and defects. All these meanings implied in the word 'Salaam' would be the salutations of the people of

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[707] Surat Al-Insan: 8-9

[708] Al-Bukhari and Muslim

Paradise. This is indicated in Allah's words:

'They shall not hear therein (in Paradise) any Laghw (dirty, false, evil vain talk), but only Salaam (salutations of peace)'.[709]

For entering Paradise you have to have pure and strong Faith. Whereas communal feeling of respect among Muslims and this Islamic social value can only be achieved by promoting peace. Narrated Abu Hurairah (RA), Allah's Messenger (SAW) said: *"You will not enter Paradise until you believe, and you will not believe until you love one another. Shall I inform you of something which, if you do, you will love one another? Promote greetings amongst yourselves".*[710]

We are commanded to promote sociability and friendliness in our behaviours at all times. The implementation of this social quality generates among people a sense of love and mutual respect for one another. This is indicated in Allah's words:

'When you are greeted with a greeting, greet in return with what is better than it, or (at least) return it equally. Certainly, Allah is Ever a Careful Account Taker of all things'.[711]

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[709] Surat Maryam: 62

[710] Muslim

[711] Surat An-Nisa: 86

Abdullah ibn Amru Ibn Al-As (RAm) narrated: a man asked the Prophet (SAW): 'Whose Islam is good or what sort of deeds (or what qualities) of Islam are good' The Prophet replied: *"To feed (others) and to greet those whom you know and those whom you do not know"*.[712]

We are advised to accept hospitality and good fellowship in each other houses. We are also told to offer greetings at the time of entering into the houses. This is indicated in Allah's words:

'But when you enter the houses, greet one another with a greeting from Allah (i.e. say: As-Salamu 'Alaikum - peace be on you) blessed and good. Thus Allah makes clear the Ayât (these Ayats or your religious symbols and signs, etc.) to you that you may understand'.[713]

It is considered as an excellent act of goodness, purity and blessing to the household. Narrated Kildah bin Al-Hambal (RAHM): "I visited the Prophet (SAW) and I entered his house without seeking permission. So he said: *'Go back and say: (As-Salamu Alaikum). May I come in?'*".[714]

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[712] Al-Bukhari and Muslim

[713] Surat An-Nur: Ayat 61

[714] Abu Dawud and At-Tirmidhi

Promoting greetings and giving food are essential Divine practices to Muslims because they can lead to Paradise without being penalised in the Hell-Fire. This is signified in the Hadeeth narrated by Abdullah bin Salaam (RA), I heard Allah's Messenger (SAW) saying: *"O people, exchange greetings of peace, feed people, strengthen the ties of kinship, and be in prayer when others are asleep, you will enter Paradise in peace".*[715]

We are asked to invite people for food and accept invitation. This will create love and strengthen the relationship among people in the community. Narrated Abu Hurairah (RA): the Prophet (SAW) said: *"I shall accept the invitation even if I were invited to a meal of a sheep's trotter, and I shall accept the gift even if it were an arm of a sheep".*[716]

Presents should also not be rejected. Allah's Messenger (SAW) did not reject gifts. This is indicated in the Hadeeth narrated by Aishah (RA): "Allah's Messenger (SAW) used to accept gifts and used to give something in return".[717]

Etiquettes of offering the greetings have been prescribed to us by the Prophet (SAW). In this respect we should take into consideration the

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715 At-Tirmidhi

716 Al-Bukhari

717 Al-Bukhari

the Sunnah of the Prophet (SAW). Narrated Abu Hurairah (RA), Allah's Messenger (SAW) said: *"A rider should greet a pedestrian; a pedestrian should greet one who is sitting; and a small group should greet a large group of people".*[718]

It is essential to offer greetings to a gathering, on our arrival and departure. This is indicated in the hadeeth narrated by Abu Hurairah (RA), Allah's Messenger (SAW) said: *"When one of you arrives in a gathering, he should offer Salaam to those who are already there, and he should also do so when he intends to depart. The first act of greeting is not more meritorious than the last".*[719]

We are told to lower our voice and to be modest when greeting people particularly when visiting the sick or offering As-Salamu Alaikum to people who are awake while others are asleep so as not to disturb them.

In addition to promoting greetings, it is desirable to meet your brother with a cheerful face and to shake hands at the time of meeting. We have been informed that the companions of Allah's Messenger (SAW) used to shake hands when meeting each other. Handshaking is recommended by the Prophet (SAW). Narrated Al-Bara bin Azib

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[718] Al-Bukhari and Muslim

[719] Abu Dawud

Allah's Messenger (SAW) said: *"Two Muslims will not meet and shake hands without having their sins forgiven (by Allah) before they depart"*.[720]

O Allah! Help us in remembering You, in offering thanks to You, and in worshipping You properly.

3.24. Spending in the Cause of Allah (Acts of Charity)

To think of those who are less fortunate than ourselves and help those in need whether in giving material things or in helping in moral and spiritual matters is a part of Faith. We have been instructed by several Ayats of the Qur'an and the hadeeth of Allah's Messenger (SAW) to execute charitable acts. Allah mentions:

'Those who spend their wealth (in Allah's Cause) by night and day, in secret and in public, they shall have their reward with their Lord. On them shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve'.[721]

Practical deeds of charity are of value when they proceed from love, and from no other motive. In this respect, our acts of charity take various forms, which are shown in reasonable gradation: our

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[720] Abu Dawud

[721] Surat Al-Baqarah: 274

kinsfolk; to the orphans (including any persons who are without support or help): to the poor: people who are in real need but who never ask (it is our duty to find them out, and they should come before those who ask); the wayfarer, who is entitled to laws of hospitality; the people who ask and are entitled to ask and to the slaves. Slavery no longer exists but it could include people who are in debt or in prison and need help. Allah also said:

'And gives his wealth, in spite of love for it, to the kinsfolk, to the orphans, and to Al-Masâkin (the poor), and to the wayfarer, and to those who ask, and to set slaves free, performs As-Salah (Iqamat-as-Salah), and gives the Az-Zakah, and who fulfil their covenant when they make it, and who are As-Sâbirin (the patient ones, etc.) in extreme poverty and ailment (disease) and at the time of fighting (during the battles). Such are the people of the truth and they are Al-Muttaqûn (pious)'.[722]

Thus, the essence of charity is Faith and love. Spending should be totally for the sake of Allah without showing off or to be seen. Whatever a person does as an act of charity, he should do so

[722] Surat Al-Baqarah: 177

with a good and sincere intention in his heart. Narrated Abu Hurairah (RA), the Prophet (SAW) said: *"Seven people will be shaded by Allah under His Shade on the Day of Resurrection when there will be no shade except His.* (From them is:) *'A person who practises charity so secretly that his left hand does not know what his right hands has given'.*[723]

Narrated Abu Hurairah (RA), the Prophet (SAW) said: *"Everyday two angels come down from heaven and one of them says, 'O Allah compensate every person who spends in Your Cause, and the other angel says 'O Allah! Destroy every miser".*[724]

Sustenation of the members of the family, relatives and companions is considered the greatest charity. Allah also said:

'Worship Allah and join none with Him in worship, and do good to parents, kinsfolk, orphans, Al-Masâkin (the poor), the neighbour who is near of kin, the neighbour who is a stranger, the companion by your side, the wayfarer (you meet), and those (slaves) whom your right hands possess. Verily, Allah does not like such as are proud and boastful'.[725]

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[723] Al-Bukhari. Only One of them is mentioned here for the rest see section (1.21)

[724] Al-Bukhari

[725] Surat An-Nisa: 36

It has been narrated on the authority of Thouban bin Buhdud (RA), he heard Allah's Messenger (SAW) saying: *"The most excellent Dinar is one that a person spends on his family, and the Dinar which he spends on his animal in Allah's Path, and the Dinar he spends on his companions in Allah's Cause".*[726]

Excellence of generosity and inclination towards spending in the Cause of Allah has been strongly encouraged. It is reported on the authority of Ibn Musud (RA): the Messenger of Allah (SAW) said: *"The position of only two persons is enviable; a person upon whom Allah bestows his bounties and gives him the power to spend in a righteous cause; and a person upon whom Allah bestows wisdom by means of which he judges and teaches".*[727]

It is better to seek no publicity in charity. However, if it is for public purposes it might be known and here there is no harm. The spiritual benefit ensures to our own souls, provided our motives are pure, and we are really seeking the good pleasure of Allah. The main purpose of charity is to relieve those really in need, whether they are good or bad, on the right path or not, Muslims or otherwise. It is not for us to judge in these matters. Allah will give light according to His wisdom. The chief motive in charity should

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[726] Muslim

[727] Al-Bukhari

be Allah's pleasure and our own spiritual good. This is signified in Allah's words:

'And the likeness of those who spend their wealth seeking Allah's Pleasure while they in their ownselves are sure and certain that Allah will reward them (for their spending in His Cause)'.[728]

Attaining perfect Faith can be achieved by spending desirable things from honest earning for Allah's Cause. Charity has value only provided something good is given which has been honourably earned and which can be referred to as a bounty of Allah. Allah also said:

'By no means shall you attain Al-Birr (piety, righteousness, etc., it means here Allah's Reward, i.e. Paradise), unless you spend (in Allah's Cause) of that which you love; and whatever of good you spend, Allah knows it well'.[729]

Charity instead of impoverishing you will enrich you: you will have more happiness and less fear. When we think of doing some real act of charity, we are devastated with doubts and fear of impoverishment; but evil supports any tendency to

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[728] Surat Al-Baqarah: 265

[729] Surat Al-Imran: 92

to selfishness, greed or self-indulgence. On the other hand, Allah draws us on to all that is kind and good, for that way lies the forgiveness of our sins. No generous act ever ruined any one. It is false generosity that is sometimes shown as leading to ruin. As Allah knows all our motives and cares for all, and has everything in His power. What we have to remember is that Allah prohibits miserliness and He reveals that wealth will not be diminished by charity. Allah enhances the honour of one who serves another to seek the pleasure of Him and He exalts the one who spends in ranks. Allah said:

'Those who are miserly and enjoin miserliness on other men and hide what Allah has bestowed upon them of His Bounties. And We have prepared for the disbelievers a disgraceful torment'.[730]

A charitable deed when it is done for the sake of Allah must not be followed by reference or reminders to the act of charity and no injury must be caused to the recipient. At the same time, while no reward is to be expected, there is abundant reward from Allah (material, moral and spiritual) according to His own good pleasure and plan. False charity, 'to be seen of men' is really no charity. In this context Allah said:

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[730] Surat An-Nisa: 37

'Kind words and forgiving of faults are better than Sadaqah (charity) followed by injury. And Allah is Rich (Free of all wants) and He is Most-Forbearing'.[731]

If we spend in the way of Allah, it is not as if Allah was in need of our charity. On the contrary, our short-comings are so great that we require His utmost forbearance. A man of true charity is spiritually healthy; he is best situated to attract the bounties of Allah, which he does not store selfishly but distributes freely. He is content with what he has and looks to Allah's pleasure and the strengthening of his own soul. That is why charity helps our sins to be forgiven. All of us wish for forgiveness so that we may enter Paradise. Our Prophet (SAW) informed us that Charity extinguishes sins like water extinguishes fire. Narrated Mu'ad bin Jabal (RA), the Prophet (SAW) said to him: *"May I show you the gates of goodness?: They are: (1) Fasting is a screen from Hell. (2) As-Sadaqah (deeds of charity in Allah's Cause) extinguishes (removes) the sins, as the water extinguishes the fire. (3) Standing in Salah during the middle part of a night".*[732]

Although donating money in the cause of Allah is considered a great deed, it should be realised that charity could be measured in more than just coins.

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731 Surat Al-Baqarah: 263

732 Abu Dawud and At-Tirmidhi

In Islam, it is not spending money alone that counts as charity, meeting people with a smiling countenance is a virtue; talking to somebody in a decent way is charity, etc. Narrated Abu Hurairah (RA), the Messenger of Allah (SAW) said: *"There is a compulsory charity to be given for every joint of human body, every day the sun rises. To judge justly between two people is regarded as a charity. To help a man concerning riding his camel or helping to lift his luggage on to the camel; is a charity. Saying a good word is a charity, every step taken on ones way to the mosque to offer the obligatory prayer is charity and to remove something harmful from the way is a charity".*[733]

It has also been reported by Abu Hurairah (RA): the Messenger of Allah (SAW) said: *"It is a charity to utter a good word"*. Even in our spare time, saying *Subhanallah* (Glory be to Allah) *Alhamdulillah* (Praise be to Allah), and *Allahu-Akbar* (Allah is Most Greatest), will count as acts of charity because we are recognising Allah's attributes and qualities.

Whatever good we enjoy comes from Allah and it is our duty to use some of it in the service of others, for that is charity and the service of Allah. Such practical charity and love will be the acid test of Faith and the teaching of all virtues. Not only will they be the test by which the sincerity of their

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[733] Al-Bukhari

Faith will be judged; they will be the fruit, which their Faith will constantly produce. Allah has provided us with so many ways of performing acts of charity. We must not postpone our good resolutions to the future. Death may come unexpectedly to us, and we cannot then appeal for more time. After all, we should aim to please Allah and we should remember that whatever a person spends seeking thereby the pleasure of Allah he will have its rewards. If people are selfish and withhold their hand, they only injure themselves. They do not hurt Allah's Cause, for He is independent of all needs. He is worthy of all praise in His care for His creatures.

O Allah! We ask You for guidance, virtuousness, chastity and detachment from the world. O Allah! We ask You not to let worldly affairs become our greatest concern and our goal.

3.25. An-Nasiha (Giving advice/Well-Wishing)

The Arabic word Nasiha has a variety of meanings, the most common being 'good advice'. Since all believers are nothing else than brothers so well wishing becomes a part of Faith and every Muslim should advise his brother in accordance to the Qur'an and the Sunnah wishing only to please Allah. When Allah sent Noah (AS) to his people asking them to worship Allah Alone and warning them against severe torment, the leaders of his

people rejected his advice and accused him of being in error. So Noah (AS) said:

'I convey unto you the Messages of my Lord and give sincere advice to you'.[734]

Similarly, Hud (AS) when he was sent to A'ad, the leaders of his people accused him of being fool and a liar. But Hud said to them:

'I convey unto you the Messages of my Lord, and I am a trustworthy adviser (or well-wisher) for you'.[735]

The above Ayats clearly illustrate the value of advise to every one, however, when giving an advice the following aspects should be taken into consideration:

- The advice should be totally for the sake of Allah and his Messenger Muhammad (SAW) ;
- The well-wisher should choose adequate time and place for giving his advice;
- There should be no personal or worldly interest;
- It should not be in public when the advice is given to an individual. If it is a common advice the well-wisher should adopt the way of the Prophet (SAW) who when giving a common

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[734] Surat Al-Araf: 62

[735] Surat Al-Araf: 68

advice used to say *'What about people doing this and that'.*

Narrated Anas (RA), Allah's Messenger (SAW) said: *"Religion is an-Nasiha: We said to whom? He said: 'To Allah, to His Messenger, to the Muslims rulers, and to all the Muslims".736*

1. To Allah means: to be sincere and true to Allah (obeying Him by following His religion 'Islam', attributing to Him what He deserves and doing Jihad for His sake and to believe in Him and fear Him much (abstain from all kinds of sins and evil deeds which He has forbidden) and to love Him much (perform all kinds of good deeds which He has ordained).

2. To Allah's Messenger (SAW) to respect him greatly and to fight on his behalf and follow his Sunnah. Any advice or recommendation should be given in relation to these two aspects i.e. for the sake of Allah and His Messenger.

3. To the Muslim rulers: to help them in their job of leading Muslims to the Right Path and warn them if they are heedless.

4. To All the Muslims (in common): To order them to do good and to forbid them from evil

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[736] Muslim

and to help them and to be merciful and kind to them.

Giving council to each Muslim is so significant in Islam that the Prophet (SAW) considered it as a part of Faith and commanded his companions to act upon it in the same way as he did in the case of other obligatory acts like Salah or Az-Zakah. Jarir bin Abdullah (RA) narrated: I went to the Prophet (SAW) and said: "I gave my pledge to Allah's Messenger on the observance of Salah, payment of Az-Zakah, and giving council to each Muslim".[737]

To be true and sincere to every Muslim has been emphasised since it creates mutual love in Muslim communities. Negligence of these sacred principles will lead Muslim societies into a life of disgrace and humiliation.

O Allah! Fill our hearts with peace, Faith, security and with the power to do what You love and are pleased with. O Allah! We hope for Your Mercy so set right all our affairs.

3.26. Ada' al-Amanah (Establishing the Trust)

The idiom Al- Amanah (Trust) is a very inclusive term which comprises everything like observance

[737] Al-Bukhari and Muslim

of Divine commands, justice in dealing, giving everybody his/her right(s), etc. Al-Amanah can also be of different types: (a) property, belongings, goods, etc.; (b) confidences, secrets, etc.; (c) knowledge, talents, faculties, etc. which we are expected to use for our fellowmen.

The fact that establishing the trust is a part of faith is indicated in Allah's words and in the legal ways of the Prophet (SAW). Allah said:

'Verily, Allah commands that you should render back the trusts to those, to whom they are due; and that when you judge between men, you judge with justice. Verily, how excellent is the teaching, which Allah gives you! Truly, Allah is Ever all-Hearer, All-Seer'.[738]

Narrated Hudhaifah (RA) Allah's Messenger (SAW) said to us: *"Certainly Al-Amanah (The honesty, trust, moral responsibility) descended from the heaven and settled in the roots of the hearts of men (Faithful believers), and then the Qur'an was revealed and the people read the Qur'an, (and learnt Al-Amanah from it) and also learnt it from the Sunnah".*[739]

Man may betray the trust of Allah and His Messenger by misusing property, or abusing

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[738] Surat An-Nisa: 58

[739] Al-Bukhari

confidence reposed to them, or the knowledge given to them. Occasions for thoroughly respecting the trust and confidence of our fellowmen occur every day in our life, and few of us can claim perfection in this respect. Hence the special distinction of Allah's Messenger (SAW) who earned the title of Al-Ameen (the trustworthy). That is why when Allah offered Al- Amanah (the trust) to His creatures e.g. the heavens, the earth and the mountains, they refused to undertake it, lest they should betray it. However, man was less fair to himself: in his ignorance he accepted and betrayed that trust, with the result that some of his race became hypocrites and unbelievers and were punished, though others were Faithful to the trust and received Allah's Mercy. Allah said:

'Truly, We did offer Al-Amânah (the trust or moral responsibility or honesty and all the duties, which Allah has ordained) to the heavens and the earth, and the mountains, but they declined to bear it and were afraid of it (i.e. afraid of Allah's Torment). But man bore it. Verily, he was unjust (to himself) and ignorant (of its results)'.[740]

Allah intended a very high destiny for man, and placed him in his uncorrupted state above the angels, but man in his corruption made himself

[740] Surat Al-Ahzab: 72

even lower than the beasts by betraying a trust, even Allah warned him of doing so. Allah said:

'O you who believe! Betray not Allah and His Messenger, nor betray knowingly your Amânât (things entrusted to you, and all the duties, which Allah has ordained for you)'.[741]

Abu Hurairah (RA) narrated: The Prophet (SAW) said: *"The signs of a hypocrite are three: (1) Whenever he speaks, he tells a lie, (2) Whenever he promises, he always breaks it and (3) If you trust him, he proves to be dishonest"*.[742]

It has been mentioned that Allah never supports those who betray the Amânât (things entrusted to you, and all the duties, which Allah has ordained for you). In Surat Yusuf the Aziz's wife while fully reprobating her own guilty conduct, claims that she has at least been constant, and that she hopes for mercy, forgiveness, and the capacity to understand at last what true love is. In this respect Allah has stated:
'Then Yûsuf (Joseph) said: "I asked for this enquiry in order that he (Al-'Azîz) may know that I betrayed him not in secret. And, verily! Allah guides not the plot of the betrayers'.[743]

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[741] Surat Al-Anfal: 27

[742] Al-Bukhari

[743] Surat Yusuf: 52

On the Day of Resurrection, the double-faced people who appear to some people with one face and to other people with another face will be the worst people before Allah. Narrated Ibn Umar (RA), the Prophet (SAW) said: *"For every betrayer, a flag will be raised on the Day of Resurrection, and it will be announced (publicly); 'This is the betrayal of so-and-so, the son of so-and-so".*[744]

O Allah! Forgive our errors, ignorance and immoderation in our affairs. You are better aware of our faults than ourselves.

3.27. Being good to neighbours

The spirit of Islam is to obey Allah and do good to all humans particularly, parents, friends, neighbours etc. The fact that to be kind to the neighbour is a part of Faith has been emphasised in a number of Ayats from the Holy Book and sayings of the Prophet (SAW). We are commanded to be kind to the neighbours whether they are of kin or are strangers. This is indicated in Allah's words:

'Worship Allah and join none with Him in worship, and do good to parents, kinsfolk, orphans, the poor who beg, the neighbour who is near of near of kin, the neighbour who is a stranger, the companion by your side, the

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[744] Al-Bukhari

wayfarer, and those whom your right hands possess. Verily Allah does not like such as are proud and boastful'.[745]

Narrated Abu Hurairah (RA), the Messenger of Allah (SAW) said: *"By Allah, he does not believe! By Allah, he does not believe! It was said: Who is that, O' Allah's Messenger? He said: That person whose neighbour does not feel safe from his evil". "In another version of Muslim: He will not enter Paradise whose neighbour is not secure from his wrongful conduct".*[746] It has also been reported that the Messenger of Allah (SAW) recommended us to be kind to our neighbours and treat them well. Ibn Umar and A'isha (RAHM) narrated that they heard the Messenger of Allah (SAW) saying: *"Jibra'il (AS) impressed upon me (the kind treatment) towards the neighbour (so much), I thought as if he would soon confer upon him the (right) of inheritance".*[747]

It has been narrated on the authority of Abdullah bin Umar (RAHM): the Messenger of Allah (SAW) said: *"The best of companions in the sight of Allah is the one who is a well-wisher of his companion, and the best of neighbours in the sight of Allah is the one who is the well-wisher of his neighbour".*[748]

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[745] Surat An-Nisa: 36

[746] Al-Bukhari and Muslim

[747] Al-Bukhari and Muslim

[748] At-Tirmidhi

We have been informed that part of believing in Allah and the Hereafter is to be kind to neighbours and never harm them. This is signified by the Hadeeth narrated by Abu Hurairah (RA): Allah Messenger (SAW), said: *"Whosoever believes in Allah and the Last Day should not harm his neighbour, and whosoever believes in Allah and the Last Day should entertain his guests generously and whosoever believes in Allah and the Last Day should talk what is good or keep quiet"*.[749]

O Allah! Help us to be kind to our neighbours. We seek refuge in You against the decline of Your Favours, passing of safety, the suddenness of Your punishment and all that which displeases You.

3.28. Hospitality to Guests

We are strongly encouraged to entertain our guests generously and never disgrace them. We are commanded to welcome them with a smiling countenance and politeness in speech. In (Surat Adh-Dhariyat) Allah the Most Generous says:

'Has the story reached you, of the honoured guests (the angels) of Ibrahîm (Abraham)? When they came in to him, and said, "Salâm, (peace be upon you)!" He answered; "Salâm,

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[749] Al-Bukhari

(peace be upon you)," and said: "You are a people unknown to me". Then he turned to his household, so brought out a roasted calf [as the property of Ibrahîm (Abraham) was mainly cows]. And placed it before them, (saying): "Will you not eat?".[750]

The above Ayats illustrate the character of Abraham (AS) who quietly proceeded to perform the rites of hospitality to his guests. Man is easily intimidated by contrasts in his own fortunes, and yet he does not learn from them the lesson of being generous and hospitable to others in particular to guests. The honourable position of guests in Islam has also been described when people of Lut (AS) sought to shame his guests. He defended them and used all his power to stop them from disgracing his guests. Allah said:

'Lut said: "Verily! These are my guests, so shame me not".[751]

It has been narrated on the authority of Abu Hurairah (RA): the Messenger of Allah (SAW) said: *"He who believes in Allah and the Last Day should not harm his neighbour, and he who believes in Allah and the Last Day should show hospitality to his guest and he who believes in Allah and the Last Day should speak good*

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[750] Surat Adh-Dhariyat: 24-27

[751] Surat Al-Hijr: 68

or remains silent".[752]

This tells us that showing hospitality to guests is part of believing in Allah. O Allah help us to be generous to our guests and grant us the provision of piety, forgive our sins and facilitate for us the doing of good.

3.29. Following the Jama'h (the group)

All Muslims are asked to hold together in union and harmony. In doing so, they are promised security from harm from their enemies, and enjoined to seek friendship among their own people. Allah has commanded us to hold fast together to His rope and be one nation. He Subhanahu Wa-Ta'ala said:

'Truly! This, Ummah of yours is a single Ummah, And I am your Lord, therefore worship Me (Alone)'.[753]

The term Ummah is best translated as one community, race or nation, which has one religion or one way of life. In Islam people of very different languages, surroundings, history, and occupation form the closest brotherhood, being men and women united in the highest service of Allah. All

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[752] Al-Bukhari

[753] Surat Al-Anbiya: 92

Prophets form one brotherhood; their message is one, and their religion and teaching are one; they serve the One True God (Allah), Who loves and cherishes them; and they owe their duty to Him and Him Alone. Allah said:

'Mankind were but one community (i.e. on one religion - Islamic Monotheism), then they differed (later), and had not it been for a Word that went forth before from your Lord, it would have been settled between them regarding what they differed'.[754]

On the other hand, Allah commanded us not to differ among ourselves and fall into disputations. Allah said:

'And be not as those who divided and differed among themselves after the clear proofs had come to them. It is they for whom there is an awful torment'.[755]

Ibn Umar (RAHM) has reported that, he heard the Messenger of Allah (SAW) saying: *"He who dies having discarding his association with the main body of the community, dies the death of one belonging to the days of ignorance".*[756]

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754 Surat Yunus: 19

755 Surat Al-Imran: 105

756 Muslim

We are also strongly commanded by Allah's Messenger (SAW) to be one nation and hold fast to the Holy Qur'an and his Sunnah. This is signified in Allah's words:

'And whoever contradicts and opposes the Messenger (Muhammad (SAW)) after the right path has been shown clearly to him, and follows other than the believers' way. We shall keep him in the path he has chosen, and burn him in Hell - what an evil destination'.[757]

Indeed this is the main source of understanding Islam and the way of men of Faith. It has been narrated by Abu Hurairah (RA), the Prophet (SAW) said: *"The Jews and Christians were divided into seventy-one or seventy-two religious sects, and this nation will be divided into seventy-three religious sects - all in Hell, except one, and that one is the one of me and my Companion".*[758]

We have been informed that whosoever dies having discarded his association with the main body of the community; he dies the death of one belonging to the days of Jahiliah (time of ignorance). We are also commanded to be merciful to each other, to keep good relations with one another and never abuse each other. Allah said:

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[757] Surat An-Nisa: 115

[758] At-At-Tirmidhi, Ibn Majah and Abu Dawud

'The believers are nothing else than brothers'.[759]

In this Ayat Allah beautifully paints a picture of the believers. Narrated An-Numan bin Bashir (RA): Allah's Messenger (SAW) said: *"You see the believers as regards their being merciful among themselves and showing love among themselves and being kind among themselves resembling one body, so that, if any part of the body is not well then the whole body shares the sleeplessness and fever with it".*[760]

We have also been strongly directed as one community to co-operate with each other in order to protect our own brotherhood and our Faith from insult and scorn. Narrated Abu Musa (RA): Allah's Messenger (SAW) said: *"A believer to another believer is like a building whose different parts enforce each other".* The Prophet then clasped his hands with the fingers interlaced.[761]

We are also strongly commanded to be humble towards one another and never to annoy each other. Thus, it has been mentioned that the blood, honour and property of a Muslim is forbidden for another. Abu Bakr (RA) reported that the Messenger of Allah (SAW) delivering the sermon

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[759] Surat Al-Hujurat: 10

[760] Al-Bukhari

[761] Al-Bukhari

relating to the last pilgrimage on the day of sacrifice at Mina said: *"Verily your blood, your property are sacred and inviolable as the sanctity of this day of yours, in this month of yours and in this town of yours. Behold! Have I conveyed this message to You?"*.[762]

On the basis of the above arguments, one can affirm that causing division among people, who were meant to be one brotherhood, and creating conflict among the one nation is a great Fitnah (discord/sedition) and a shameful act. Narrated Abdullah bin Mas'ud (RA): I heard a man reciting a Ayat of the Qur'an but I had heard the Prophet (SAW) reciting it differently. So, I caught hold of the man by the hand and took him to Allah's Messenger (SAW) who said: *"Both of you are right. Don't differ, for the nations before you differed and perished because of their differences"*.[763]

We have been severely warned against causing friction among brothers in one community for it affects innocent and guilty alike. Islam is the religion of peace and mutual undemanding. Causing disagreement or persecuting Muslims is a great crime. It is even considered worse than slaughter. This is signified in Allah's words:

'And Al-Fitnah (discord/sedition) is worse

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[762] Al-Bukhari and Muslim

[763] Al-Bukhari

than killing'.[764]

Even in performing acts of worship such as Salah, the Imam is commanded to observe the people whom he leads so that to avoid Fitnah. Narrated Abu Mas'ud (RA), a man came and said: "O Allah's Messenger. By Allah! I keep away from the Morning Prayer only because so-and-so- prolongs the Salah (prayer) when he leads us in it". The narrator said: 'I never saw Allah's Messenger more furious in giving advice than he was at that time'. He then said: *"Some of you make people dislike good deeds (the Salah). So whoever among you leads the people in Salah should shorten it because among them are the weak, the old and the one who is in a state that requires urgent relief".*[765]

We ask our Lord Allah to unite our hearts so that we may reach, through righteousness and Faith, our highest development, and enjoy His gifts of Mercy and Grace.

3.30. Obedience to the Muslim rulers except in a sin.

The obligation of obedience to the ruler has been emphasised in the Holy Book and through the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah, the

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[764] Surat Al-Baqarah: 191

[765] Al-Bukhari

companions and Muslim scholars as well. A community must show its respect to its rulers in all forms of behaviour. Allah said:

'O you who believe! Obey Allah and obey the Messenger (Muhammad (SAW)) and Ulu-Al-Amr (those of you who are in authority)'.[766]

The term 'Uli-Al-Amr' refers to those charged with authority, responsibility, decision-making or the settlement of affairs. The above Ayat indicates that all decisive authority rests with Allah. Allah's Messengers obtain their authority from Him. As Islam makes no sharp division between sacred and worldly affairs, it expects governments to be imbued with righteousness. Likewise Islam expects Muslims to respect the authority of such government for otherwise there can be no order or discipline. It is also reported on the authority of Abu Hurairah (RA): the Messenger of Allah (SAW) said: *"It is obligatory upon you to listen and obey to the orders of the ruler in prosperity and adversity whether you are willing or unwilling or when some one is given undue preference over you".*[767]

It has been mentioned that in times of war or public panic or critical matters, which touch public safety, we are commanded to hand all news direct

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[766] Surat An-Nisa: 59

[767] Muslim

to those charged with authority among us to investigate it. This can help the rulers to take suitable measures thereby help the community to understand and solve all matters directly. Allah said:

'When there comes to them some matter touching (public) safety or fear, they make it known (among the people), if only they had referred it to the Messenger or to those charged with authority among them, the proper investigators would have understood it from them (directly)'.[768]

Ibn Umar (RAHM) reported that the Messenger of Allah (SAW) said: *"It is obligatory upon a Muslim that he should listen (to the ruler) and obey whether he likes it or not except when he is ordered to do a sinful thing, in such case there is no obligation to listen or to obey".*[769]

It can be understood that hearing and obeying the ruler is obligatory and whosoever withdraws his hand from obedience to the person who is placed in authority over him will find no argument (in his defence) when he stands before Allah on the Day of Judgement. It has been narrated that 'Whoever dies having defected from the obedience of the

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[768] Surat An-Nisa: 83

[769] Al-Bukhari and Muslim

ruler will die the death of one belonging to the days of Ignorance'. This has also been supported by the authentic saying of the Messenger of Allah (SAW). Auf bin Malik (RA) narrated that the Messenger of Allah (SAW) said: *"The best of your rulers are those whom you love and love you, who invoke Allah's blessings upon you and you invoke His blessings upon them. The worst of your rulers are those whom you hate and who hate you and whom you curse and who curse you. It was asked (by those who were present): Should not we overthrow them with the help of the sword. He said: No, as long as they establish prayer among you".*[770]

Thus it is obligatory upon a Muslim that he should listen to the ruler and obey to the best of his capacity. Abu Hurairah (RA) reported that the Messenger of Allah (SAW) said: *"Whosoever obeys me, obeys Allah and he who disobeys me, disobeys Allah; and whosoever obeys my commander, obeys me and he who disobeys my commander disobeys me".*[771]

It has been mentioned that we have to give total obedience even if a slave becomes our ruler. On the authority of Al-Irbad ibn Sariya (RA) who said: *"The Messenger of Allah (SAW) gave us a sermon by which our hearts were filled with fear and tears came to our eyes. We said: O Messenger of Allah, it is as though this is a farewell sermon, so counsel us: He said: 'I counsel*

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[770] Muslim

[771] Al-Bukhari and Muslim

you to fear Allah (Azza Wa-Jal) and to give absolute obedience even if a slave becomes your leader".[772]

Rulers will be responsible for their obligations to us and we will be accountable for our responsibilities. We have to give them what is due to them and supplicate Allah for our rights. If a person dislikes his ruler, he should show patience.

O Allah! Creator of the heavens and the earth, Who knows the unseen and the seen, we seek refuge in You from the evil within ourselves and from the evil of all creatures under Your control.

3.31. Reconciliation among people

Obedience, Faith and gratitude to Allah, are the true passports to success and protection from the attacks of evil. Making peace and appeasing differences among parties is of great significance in Islam. In Islam the enforcement of the Muslim brotherhood is one of the greatest social aspect and Islam cannot be completely realised until this aspect is achieved. We therefore have been commanded to make peace and reconciliation between contending brothers. Allah said:

'The believers are nothing else than brothers (in Islamic religion). So make reconciliation

[772] Abu Dawud and At-Tirmidhi

between your brothers, and fear Allah, that you may receive mercy'.[773]

Allah also said:

'So Fear Allah and adjust all matters of differences among you, and obey Allah and His Messenger (Muhammad (SAW)), if you are believers'.[774]

Islam disapproves of secrecy and enjoins openness in all consultations. However secrecy can be permissible, and indeed admirable, provided the motive be purely unselfish, to earn 'the good pleasure of Allah'. In this respect secret talks are permitted where there is a delicate question of reconciling parties in a quarrel; they may be very sensitive about publicity but quite agreeable to the influence of a man acting in private. Allah said:

'There is no good in most of their secret talks save (in) him who orders Sadaqa or Maruf, or conciliation between mankind, and he who does this, seeking the good Pleasure of Allah, We shall give him a great reward'.[775]

The above Ayats clearly indicate that making

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[773] Surat Al-Hujurat: 10

[774] Surat Al-Anfal: 1

[775] Surat An-Nisa: 114

peace, reconciliation between mankind and doing justice between two men is fundamental in Islam. Lying is prohibited in Islam, a liar is not one who makes peace among people, speaks good or promotes good. The Prophet (SAW) did not give permission for lying in anything of what people utter except in three (things), war, restoring peace among men and the conversation of man with his wife and the conversation of a woman with her husband. On the authority of Abu Darda (RA), Allah's Messenger (SAW) said: *"May I inform you of the deed that is better than the fast, the charity and the prayer?" The companions said, 'Yes' Upon this the Prophet said: that deed is, reconciliation between Muslims, and rancour amongst them is destructive".*[776]

In reconciliation among people or nations, it would be expected to act justly and try to calm the quarrel, for peace is better than fighting. However, we have been informed that if one party is determined to be the aggressor, the whole force of the community is brought to bear on it. Allah said:

'And if two parties or groups among the believers fall to fighting, then make peace between them both, but if one of them rebels against the other, then fight you (all) against the one that which rebels till it complies with the Command of Allah; then if it complies,

[776] Abu Dawud

then make reconciliation between them justly, and be equitable. Verily! Allah loves those who are equitable'.[777]

The above Ayat indicates that the essential status of reconciliation is that there should be perfect impartiality, justice and respect, for Islam takes account of every fair and legal interest without separating spiritual from worldly benefits. The Muslim nations have failed because these basic prerequisites were missed and today the United Nations fails on the same grounds.

O Allah! We seek Your refuge against going astray or leading others astray, slipping or causing others to slip, doing wrong or being wronged by others and behaving arrogantly or being treated arrogantly by others.

3.32. Helping one another in Al-Birr and At-Taqwa (piety/righteousness)

Al-Birr is a comprehensive term that includes all meanings of good and all acts of righteousness and each and every act of obedience to Allah. The fact that helping one another in righteousness and piety is a part of Faith has been indicated in a number of Ayats in Allah's Book and in many Hadeeth of the Prophet (SAW). We have been

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[777] Surat Al-Hujurat: 9

commanded by Allah to assist each other in Al-Birr and At-Taqwa. Allah has stated:
'Help you one another in Al-Birr and At-Taqwa (virtue, righteousness and piety); but do not help one another in sin and transgression'.[778]

Abdullah bin Umar (RAm) narrated that: the Prophet (SAW) said: *"Truthfulness leads to Al-Birr and Al-Birr (righteousness) leads to Paradise. And a man keeps on telling the truth till he becomes a truthful person. Falsehood leads to Al-Fujur (i.e. wickedness, evil-doing) and Al-Fujur leads to the (Hell) Fire, and a man may keep on telling lies till he is written before Allah, a liar".*[779]

At-Taqwa (piety or righteousness) means believing of Islamic Monotheism by fearing Allah much (abstaining from all kinds of sins and evil deeds which He has forbidden) and loving Allah much (performing all kinds of good deeds which He has ordained). On the authority of Wabisa ibn Mabad (RA) who said: *"I came to the Messenger of Allah (SAW) and he said: 'You have come to ask about Al-Birr? I said Yes. He said ' Consult your heart. Al-Bir is that about which the soul feels tranquil and the heart feels tranquil".*[780]

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778 Surat Al-Ma'idah: 2

779 Al-Bukhari

780 Ahmad

We have to fight and put down evil, but never with a spirit of hatred and enmity, but always with a spirit of justice and righteousness. Helping one another in Al-Birr and At-Taqwa should be ultimately directed to the understanding and implementation of the following interconnected aspects:

- our Faith should be true and sincere;
- we must be prepared to show it in deeds of charity to our fellow-men;
- we must be good citizens, supporting social organisation; and
- our own individual soul must be firm and unshaken in all circumstances.

The Prophet (SAW) ordered us to perform various acts of Birr (goodness) and directed us how and where to perform the finest acts of Birr. Cooperating with each other in righteousness and virtue should be true and sincere seeking the love of Allah.

We have to enjoin right conduct on the people at the same time we have to be the shining examples of Allah's mercy, love and justice. It has been narrated on the authority of Abdullah bin Umar (RAHM), he heard the Messenger of Allah (SAW) saying: *"The fine act of Birr (goodness) is that a person should treat kindly the loved ones of his father".*[781]

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[781] Muslim

O Allah! Direct us to the Right Path. We beg You for guidance and uprightness. O Allah! Do not destroy us with Your anger nor let us perish with Your punishment and save us before it comes to pass.

3.33. Enjoining Al-Maruf (good) and forbidding Al-Munkar (evil)

Enjoining Al-Maruf (good) and forbidding Al-Munkar (evil) is the duty of every Muslim, each according to his capacity. The objectives of this divine act are to:

1. guide mankind to Allah's religion
2. establish the evidence against those who turn away from Allah's straight path
3. set up Allah's Shari'at (Laws, regulations, commands, limits, etc) on earth.

The logical result of enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong is the attainment of happiness, in this world and the next; success and prosperity of all humanity. The ideal Muslim community is happy, untroubled by conflicts, strong, united and prosperous; because it enjoins Al-Maruf (all that Islam orders one to do) and forbids Al-Munkar (All that Islam has forbidden). Allah said:

'Let there arise out of you a group of people

inviting to all that is good (Islam), enjoining Al-Maruf (All that Islam orders one to do) and forbidding Al-Munkar (disbelief and all that Islam has forbidden). And it is they who are the successful'.[782]

In the above Ayat Allah considers those who enjoyed good and forbid evil as the successful people. Allah has also honoured the Muslim nation and considered them the best of peoples ever raised up for mankind because they are involved in enjoining good and forbidding evil. Allah said:

'You (true believers in Islamic Monotheism, and real followers of Prophet Muhammad (SAW)) are the best of peoples ever raised up for mankind; you enjoin Al-Maruf and forbid Al-Munkar'.[783]

He also considers the believers as the best of peoples ever raised up for mankind because they convey the messages of Allah to others and invite them to embrace Islam. Thereby save them from the eternal punishment in the Hell-Fire and make them enter Paradise in the Hereafter. Muslims therefore live, not for themselves, but for mankind. This implies (a) doing right and inviting

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[782] Surat Al-Imran: 104

[783] Surat Al-Imran: 110

others to do right and having the power to see that right prevails. (b) forbidding wrong and asking others to abstain from wrong, and having the power to see that wrong and injustice are defeated. We are to rejoice by doing such a deed; we are to be rewarded with such great thing as the eternal life of peace, happiness and tranquillity in the Hereafter. The true righteous people are those, whose lives in various aspects are described in the following Ayat. Allah said:

'The believers whose lives Allah has purchased are those who repent to Allah (from polytheism and hypocrisy, etc.), who worship Him, who praise Him, who fast (or go out in Allah's Cause), who bow down (in prayer), who prostrate themselves (in prayer), who enjoin (people) for Al-Ma'rûf (i.e. Islamic Monotheism and all what Islam has ordained) and forbid (people) from Al-Munkar (i.e. disbelief, polytheism of all kinds and all that Islam has forbidden), and who observe the limits set by Allah (do all that Allah has ordained and abstain from all kinds of sins and evil deeds which Allah has forbidden). And give glad tidings to the believers'.[784]

Allah sends His Mercy on the believers because they follow His orders and expound openly what

[784] Surat At-Taubah: 112

they are commanded. This is signified in Allah's words:

'The believers, men and women, are Auliya (helpers, supporters, friends, protectors) of one another; they enjoin Al-Maruf and forbid (people) from Al-Munkar. They offer their prayers perfectly and give the Az-Zakah and obey Allah and His Messenger. Allah will have His Mercy on them. Surely Allah is All-Mighty, All-Wise'.[785]

Abu Dhar (RA) narrated that Allah's Messenger said: *"When you get up in the morning charity is due from everyone of your limbs. There is charity in every ascription of glory to Allah, every declaration of His greatness, every utterance of praise to Him, every declaration that He is the only God, in enjoining what is reputable, in forbidding what is objectionable".*[786]

Those among the children of Israel who disbelieved were cursed because they did not forbid one another from wrong or evil doing, which they committed. Therefore the Prophet (SAW) orders the believers to change the Munkar (evil) and he established certain rules for this. Abu Sa'id Al-Khudri (RA) reported from Allah's Messenger (SAW) who said:

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[785] Surat At-Tauba: 71

[786] Muslim

"Whoever amongst you see Munkar (wrong, evil doing, sins, disbelief, anything objectionable), let him change it with his hand, if he is not able, then with his tongue, if he is not able, then with his heart and that is the weakest form of Faith".[787]

It has also been narrated on the authority of Hudhaifah (RA): the Messenger of Allah (SAW) said: *"By Him in Whose Hand my soul is, you must enjoin good and forbid what is evil, or Allah will certainly soon send punishment from Himself to you. Then you will make supplication and not receive an answer".*[788]

Indeed, by Allah it is the duty of Muslims to enjoin good and forbid evil and catch hold of the hand of the oppressor and persuade him to act justly and stick to the truth, else Allah will involve the hearts of some of us with the hearts of others and will curse us as He cursed the disbelievers of the Children of Israel. Abu Bakr As-Siddiq (RA) reported that he heard The Messenger of Allah (SAW) saying: *"When people see an oppressor but do not overtake him by his hand, it is near that Allah will overtake them all with His punishment".*[789]

In enjoining good and forbidding evil, we have to be true, sincere and devote ourselves to Allah.

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[787] Muslim

[788] At-Tirmidhi

[789] Abu Dawud and At-Tirmidhi

This is indicated in Allah's words:

'Say (O Muhammad (SAW)): "This is my way; I invite unto Allah (i.e. to the Oneness of Allah - Islamic Monotheism) with sure knowledge, I and whosoever follows me (also must invite others to Allah i.e. to the Oneness of Allah - Islamic Monotheism) with sure knowledge'.[790]

We have to adopt the techniques and manners mentioned in the Qur'an and implemented by the Prophet (SAW). Allah said:

'Invite (mankind, O Muhammad (SAW)) to the Way of your Lord (i.e. Islam) with wisdom and fair preaching, and argue with them in a way that is best and most gracious'.[791]

The above Ayat has laid down the principles of religious preaching. People who enjoin good and forbid evil should be equipped with such qualifications. We must invite all mankind to Allah's Path with wisdom and discretion. To attract the attention of people, our religious preaching should not be dogmatic, self-regarding, or offensive, but fair discussion. Our manner should be modelled on a gracious example. We should sincerely illustrate

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[790] Surat Yusuf: 108

[791] Surat An-Nahl: 125

the truth to others and our motive in doing so is the love of Allah. This is indicated in Allah's words:

'And who is better in speech than he who [says: "My Lord is Allah (believes in His Oneness)," and then stands straight (acts upon His Order), and] invites (men) to Allah's (Islamic Monotheism), and does righteous deeds, and says: "I am one of the Muslims'.[792]

We have to replace ignorance with knowledge, evil and wickedness with goodness and righteousness. We should not only release people from sins but also make them our friends and helpers in Allah's Cause. In this context Allah said:

'The good deed and the evil deed cannot be equal. Repel (the evil) with one, which is better (i.e. Allah ordered the faithful believers to be patient at the time of anger, and to excuse those who treat them badly), then verily! he, between whom and you there was enmity, (will become) as though he was a close friend'.[793]

When reminding people or calling to the Truth of

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[792] Surat Fussilat: 33

[793] Surat Fussilat: 34

Allah, we have to equip ourselves with the following crucial principles:

1. sincere intention to Allah and strong Faith in Him i.e. proving that our belief or thoughts are not directed at ourselves,
2. adequate and sufficient Islamic knowledge accompanied with proper conduct i.e. showing that there is no discrepancy between our speech and our behaviour,
3. highest standard of patience and self-restrain in all circumstances. Allah said:

'But none is granted goodness (the highest moral standard) except those who are patient, and none is granted it except the owner of the great portion (of the happiness in the Hereafter i.e. Paradise and in this world of a high moral character)'.[794]

To produce spiritual profits, a person who enjoins good and forbids evil has to choose: the right time, the appropriate place, an effective method and a suitable subject. In this context Allah said:

'Therefore remind (men) in case the reminder profits (them)'.[795]

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[794] Surat Fussilat: 35

[795] Surat Al-Ala: 9

It is not for us to look for results or judge people. We are told that our duty is to continue enjoining good and forbidding evil i.e. to remind and direct people to the straight path (i.e. the message of Islam). We should avoid dispute or fights. We have to leave the case of others to Allah, from Whose Eyes nothing is hidden. It is up to Allah to deal with those who reject faith. Everyone will return to Him for the final judgement. This is signified in Allah's words:

'So remind them (O Muhammad (SAW)), you are only a one who reminds. You are not a dictator over them'.[796]

We have to rejoice that by enjoining good and forbidding evil we are to be rewarded with such a great thing as the eternal life of happiness. Those who accept Islam, live Islam and give Islam are promised of glad tidings from their Lord.

'Those who repent to Allah (from polytheism and hypocrisy, etc.), who worship Him, who praise Him, who fast (or go out in Allah's Cause), who bow down (in prayer), who prostrate themselves (in prayer), who enjoin (people) for Al-Ma'rûf (i.e. Islamic Monotheism and all what Islam has ordained) and forbid (people) from Al-Munkar (i.e. disbelief,

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[796] Surat Al-Ghashiyah: 21-22

polytheism of all kinds and all that Islam has forbidden), and who observe the limits set by Allah (These do rejoice). So give glad tidings to the believers'.[797]

The biggest tragedy we face today is that most of us forget the main aim of our existence. A great number of Muslims do not use their objectives properly. We fail to meet the requirements set for enjoying good and forbidding evil. This whole spiritual and divine concept is forgotten. We are unable to have any impact on the society where we live. It is our duty to introduce the truth to others. We have to proclaim it to all mankind: 'this is our belief and our practices' and then leave the rest to Allah in Whose Hand is the guidance. Hence we have been informed that Guidance is of two kinds:

a) Guidance of Taufiq i.e. totally from Allah. Allah opens one's heart to receive the truth.

b) Guidance of Dalalah and Irshaad i.e. through preaching by Allah's Messengers and pious preachers who preach the truth i.e. Islamic Monotheism.

Therefore, in every area of life it is necessary to have faith and always to try to do one's best. A

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[797] Surat At-Taubah: 112

Muslim should not live for himself; he must spread whatever good he has of moral and spiritual life among his community. We must encourage each other - our family, friends and fellow men - to strive for what is good and have patience even with things we dislike in order to be successful.

O Allah! Make us from those who enjoin (people) for Al-Ma'rûf (i.e. Islamic Monotheism and all what Islam has ordained) and forbid (people) from Al-Munkar (i.e. disbelief, polytheism of all kinds and all that Islam has forbidden), and who observe the limits set by You.

3.34. Responding to a person when sneezing

Uttering *'Al-hamdu Lillah'* (Praise be to Allah) on sneezing and responding to it by saying *'Yarhamuka - Allah'* (May Allah have mercy on you) is considered a part of Faith. It is reported on the authority of Abu Hurairah (RA), Allah's Messenger (SAW) said:

"Allah likes sneezing and dislikes yawning. When any one of you sneezes and praise Allah; it becomes obligatory upon every Muslim who hears him to respond with: May Allah have mercy on you".[798]

We have been taught the etiquettes of responding

[798] Al-Bukhari

to the one who sneezes and how the later should reply. Abu Hurairah (RA) narrated: The Prophet (SAW) said: *"When one of you sneezes he should say: 'Al-Hamdu Lillah' (Praise be to Allah), and his brother or his companion should say to him: 'Yarhamuka - Allah' (May Allah have mercy on you). 'When he says this he should reply: 'Yahdikumu - Allah wa Yuslihu Balakum' (May Allah guide you and render sound your state of affairs)".*[799]

These Divine acts and the golden principles of Islam enhance mutual respect and love among Muslims. It will also develop a sense of harmony and peace in the community. Narrated Anas bin Malik (RA): Two men sneezed before the Prophet (SAW). The Prophet said to one of them: *"May Allah bestows His Mercy on you"*, but he did not say that to the other. On being asked (why), The Prophet (SAW) said: *"That one praised Allah (at the time of sneezing), while the other did not praise Allah".*[800]

We as Muslims should have good wishes for one another and to return good for good. It is reported on the authority of Abu Hurairah (RA), Allah's Messenger (SAW) said: *"A believer owes a believer five obligations: responding to salutations, visiting him in illness, following his funeral, accepting his invitation and*

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[799] Al-Bukhari

[800] Al-Bukhari

saying Allah have mercy on you, when he praises Allah on sneezing".[801]

In response to sneezing on the part of non-Muslims we are informed by the Prophet (SAW) to respond with: *'Yahdikumu-ullahu wa Yuslihu Balakum'* (May Allah guide you and render sound your state of affairs).

O Allah! Grant us the ability to do everything in a right manner that is in accordance with the practice of the Prophet (SAW).

3.35. Avoiding amusement and play

In this life people not only play and amuse themselves and each other, but they show off, and pile up riches, man-power and influence, in rivalry with each other. Muslims should be aware of the reason for their existence on this earth and should lead an ascetic (economical/reasonable) life. Every one should keep in mind that this life is temporary and is only sport, pastime and pageantry, which are the comforts for this world. Allah exemplifies the life of this world in a beautiful Ayat where He said:

'Know that the life of this world is only play and amusement, pomp and mutual boasting

801 Al-Bukhari

among you, and rivalry in respect of wealth and children, as the likeness of vegetation after rain, thereof the growth is pleasing to the tiller; afterwards it dries up and you see it turning yellow; then it becomes straw. But in the Hereafter (there is) a severe torment (for the disbelievers - evil doers), and (there is) Forgiveness from Allah and (His) Good Pleasure (for the believers - good doers), whereas the life of this world is only a deceiving enjoyment'.[802]

Thus this present life should not tempt us and we should not be deceived by it. So safeguard yourselves against the world and avoid the trial of Shaytan the devil. We have to believe that the only true life is the life of the Hereafter. It has been reported on the authority of Umar bin Auf (RA), "Allah's Messenger sent Abu Ubaida bin Al-Jarah (RA) to Bahrain to collect Jizya (a poll tax). When he returned, the Ansar heard about it and after prayer they presented themselves before the Prophet (SAW). When he saw them he smiled and said: *'I think you have heard about the arrival of Abu Ubaida'.* They submitted: 'O Messenger of Allah! Yes'. He said: *'Be happy and hope for that which will please you. By Allah, it is not poverty that I fear about you. But what I apprehend for you is that you might begin to desire worldly riches as they desired it and that it might*

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[802] Surat Al-Hadid: 20

destroy you as it destroyed them".[804]

Amusement and play have no lasting significance except preparing us for the serious work of life. So this life is but an interval, a preparation for the real life, which is in the Hereafter. This world's vanities are therefore to be taken for what they are worth; but they are not to be allowed to deflect our minds from the requirements of the inner life that really matters. In this context Allah said:

'And this life of the world is only amusement and play! Verily, the home of the Hereafter, that is the life indeed (i.e. the eternal life that will never end), if they but knew'.[805]

So we must use our life in this world as a preparation for the next life. A Muslim should live in this world as if he is a stranger or a traveller. Abdullah bin Mas'ud (RA) reported that the Messenger of Allah (SAW) slept on a reed mat and got up with the mark of it on his body. Ibn Mas'ud said: O Messenger of Allah! I desire that you would order us to spread out something for you and make something on which you could lie more conformably. He replied: *'What have I to do with the world? In connection with the world, I am just like a rider who sits under the shade of a tree, then goes off and*

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[804] Al-Bukhari and Muslim

[805] Surat Al-Ankabut: 64

deserts it'.[806]

It is reported on the authority of Ibn Abbas (RA): "The Messenger of Allah (SAW) went to bed hungry for several successive nights and his family also had to go without supper for many nights and their bread was mostly of barley".[807] Thus the Prophet (SAW) died and his armour was mortgaged with a Jew for thirty measures of barley. Abdullah bin Amr bin Al-As (RAHM) reported that the Messenger of Allah (SAW) said: *"He who enters the fold of Islam and is provided with sustenance which is sufficient for his needs and Allah makes him content with what He has bestowed upon him, has achieved true prosperity"*.[808]

Everyone should adopt an indifferent attitude towards this world so that he/she can gain the love of Allah. Ka'b bin Iyad (RA) narrated that he heard the Prophet (SAW) saying: *"Verily there is trial for every people and the trial for my people is wealth"*.[809]

A person should during health prepare for sickness and while alive prepare for death. Abu Hurairah (RA) narrated he heard Allah's

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[806] At-Tirmidhi
[807] At-Tirmidhi
[808] Muslim
[809] At-Tirmidhi

Messenger (SAW) saying: *"The world is the believer's prison and the disbeliever's paradise"*.[810]

It is also reported on the authority of Abu Umama bin Tha'labh (RA): the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (SAW) mentioned about the reality of world before him. Whereupon he said: *'Do you not hear? Do you not hear? Abstention is a part of Faith, abstention is a part of Faith (refraining from the world's amusement)"*.[811]

Human possessions of all kinds should not turn away the good Muslim from his devotion to Allah. Many of the attractive vanities of this world are but nets set by the devil to deceive man. The only thing real and lasting is the good life lived in the light of Allah. We have been warned against spending much of our time in making money, collecting more material resources or increasing the number of children for the sake of showing off or gaining fame. This materialistic attitude is very common today, but is discouraged in Islam. We will be questioned in the Hereafter about everything, which Allah has given to us and what we have done with it. This is indicated in Allah's words:

'Then, on that Day, you shall be asked about

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[810] Muslim

[811] Abu Dawud

the delight (you indulged in, in this world)!'.[812]

Regardless of how much wealth we can accumulate, we have to remember a fact that we cannot take any of it with us when we die and it will not help us in the Day of Judgement when we stand before Allah. In this context Allah said:

'The Day whereon neither wealth nor sons will avail, Except him who brings to Allah a clean heart [clean from Shirk (polytheism) and Nifâq (hypocrisy)'.[813]

We will be questioned about whatever bounty, which Allah has given us in this world. This is indicated in the Hadeeth narrated by Abu Berza (RA): Allah's Messenger (SAW) said: *"A slave of Allah will remain standing on the Day of Judgment until he is questioned about his life, how he spent it; and about his knowledge and how he utilised it; and about his wealth, from where he acquired it and in what way he spent it; and about his body as how he used it".*[814]

O Allah! let us live as poor and avoid us the trial of this world and the trial of wealth. O Allah! We seek refuge with you from an unsubmitting heart,

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812 Surat At-Takathur: 8

813 Surat Ash-Shua'ra: 88-89

814 At-Tirmidhi

a greedy soul, useless knowledge and unacceptable Dua.

3.36. Avoiding Israf (extravagance)

Allah provides in nature for the substance of all His creatures, because He loves them all. So we should enjoy what He provides us in moderation (commit no waste). We must enjoy with gratitude all that is good and lawful, but guard ourselves against excess. Allah said:

'But be not extravagant, verily He likes not the extravagants'.[815]

In spending Allah directed us to adopt a wise rule. It is not expected that we should be extravagant but strike a perfectly reasonable and neutral approach. Allah also said:

'And those, who, when they spend, are neither extravagant nor niggardly, but hold a medium (way) between those (extremes)'.[816]

We as Muslim have to follow a middle course in our spending - neither a miser nor a spendthrift, and not to be like those who spend in the disobedience of Allah and His Messenger (SAW).

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[815] Surat Al-Ana'm: 141

[816] Surat Al-Furqan: 67

Spendthrifts are not merely fools, but they are of the same family as the devil. And the devil himself-fell by his ingratitude to Allah. Therefore, those who misuse Allah's gifts are also ungrateful to Allah. Allah said:

'Verily, spendthrifts are brothers of the devils, and the Devil (Satan) is ever ungrateful to his Lord'.[817]

How many Muslim families are ruined by extravagant expenses at weddings, parties to friends and relatives, etc. Allah also said:

'And let not your hand be tied (like a miser) to your neck, nor stretch it forth to its utmost reach (like a spendthrift), so that you become blameworthy and in severe poverty'.[818]

Abu Hurairah (RA) has reported that Allah's Messenger (SAW) said: *"Verily, Allah likes three things for you and He disapproves three things for you. He is pleased with you that you should worship Him and do not associate anything with Him; you should hold fast the rope of Allah and be not scattered; and He disapproves for you irrelevant talk, persistence in questioning and the wasting of wealth".*[819]

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817 Surat Al-Isra: 27

818 Surat Al-Isra: 29

819 Muslim

In addition to stressing Tawheed, holding fast to Allah's Rope and unity, the above Hadeeth forbids three other aspects which are disliked by Allah: unnecessary debate, determined questioning and extravagancy. Narrated Al-Mughirah bin Shubah (RA), the Prophet (SAW) said: *"Allah has forbidden for you: (a) To be undutiful to mothers, (b) to bury your daughters alive, (c) not to pay the rights of others (e.g. Az-Zakah, charity) and (d) to beg of men. And Allah has hated for you (a) Sinful and useless talk, backbiting or that you talk too much about others, (b) to ask too many questions, (in disputed religious matters) and (c) to waste the wealth (by extravagance with lack of wisdom and thinking)".*[820]

The term Musrif can also refer to people who transgress all bounds by committing all kinds of great sins and by disobeying Allah. To accuse men of truth, who come unselfishly to bring the message of Allah, is the very height of extravagance. Allah also said:

'They (Messengers) said: "Your evil omens be with you! (Do you call it "evil omen") because you are admonished? Nay, but you are a people Musrifûn (transgressing all bounds)'.[821]

In addition, we are required to take upon

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[820] Al-Bukhari

[821] Surat Ya-Sin: 19

ourselves only what we can carry out easily (moderation in worship). Allah will accept from each individual just such duty (physical or spiritual) as he/she has the ability to offer. This is indicated in Allah's words:

'Allah burdens not a person beyond his scope'.[822]

Therefore, Israf in worship is not required, particularly when it is beyond one's capacity. This is because a person can start a good work for a while then he may get tired and then neglects or stops it altogether. In this respect one should be moderate and perform acts that he can conduct easily and regularly. Allah likes the deeds best, which a worshipper can carry out constantly, even if it is a small act. Narrated Aishah (RA): The Prophet (SAW) came in when a woman was sitting beside me. He asked me: *"Who is this?"* I said: "She is the one whose performance of Salah (prayer) has become the talk of the town. Addressing her, he (SAW) said: *"(What is this)? You are required to take upon yourselves only what you can carry out easily. By Allah, Allah does not withhold His Mercy and forgiveness of you until you neglect and give up (good works). Allah likes the deeds best which a worshiper can carry out constantly"*.[823]

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[822] Surat Al-Baqarah: 286

[823] Al-Bukhari and Muslim

Similarly, Abu Hurairah (RA) reported that: Allah's Messenger (SAW) said: *"The deeds of anyone of you will not save you (from the Hell-Fire)". They said: 'Even you (will not be saved by your deeds), O Allah's Messenger?'. He said "No, even I (will not be saved) unless and until Allah protects me with His Grace and His Mercy. Therefore, do good deeds properly, sincerely and moderately, and worship Allah in the forenoon and in the afternoon and during a part of the night, and Al-Qasd (always adopt a middle, moderate. regular course) whereby you will reach your Al-Qasd i.e. target (Paradise)".*[824]

The above Hadeeth emphasises the fact that over exerting ourselves in performing actions of worship is not recommended. We have been told that the deeds, which are loved most by Allah, are the most regular and constant deeds even though they may be few. So one should adopt a moderate way of regular, constant worshipping of Allah whereby he/she could reach his/her destination.

What we have to understand is that Israf (extravagance) in all matters, either physical or spiritual is undesirable and we as Muslim must be moderate in all situations. We have to adopt a balanced approach. We should not use more of things especially worldly resources, than is necessary or appropriate. An extravagant use of (ideas, speech or behaviour) beyond what is reasonable, usual or

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[824] Al-Bukhari

necessary should also be discarded or discouraged.

Our Lord! Punish us not if we forget or fall into error, our Lord! Lay not on us a burden like that, which You did lay on those before us (Jews and Christians); our Lord! Put not on us a burden greater than we have strength to bear. Pardon us and grant us Forgiveness.

Conclusion

Islam is for all mankind, so whosoever accepts this guidance, it will be for his own benefit and whosoever goes astray; it will be for his own destruction. We have been given the gift of certain faculties for receiving instructions intellectually and spiritually. In addition we have been shown the Way by means of revelation, through our Prophet Muhammad (SAW) . Our life has therefore a meaning. If we are grateful, we will accept guidance, be of the righteous and join the company of the blessed. If not we put chains round ourselves, thus burdening ourselves with sins and fall into the blazing fire of punishment. Allah's gifts are free, but let no one think that he can misuse them without being called to answer for his trust.

Al-Iman does not consist in formalities, but in kindness, politeness, prayer, charity, jihad, patience, etc. Virtues are a flowerbed of Faith, especially in an environment in which truth is denied. The true virtue lies in practical deeds of good Faith. When Faith is lost, man lives with no direction and life becomes meaningless. Evil must be repelled by goodness and Faith in Allah; for the future life is sure, and those who disbelieve will wish for another chance when it is too late. Faith in Allah should enter hearts and should be reflected in righteous speech and honourable actions. This is what you

have to prove if faith has any meaning. Men of Faith knew all along of the true value-of the things in this temporary life and the things that will endure and face them in the Hereafter. The Branches of Faith, which have been illustrated in this book, should be practised and taken into consideration to achieve our ultimate goal, which is attaining Allah's Pleasure. These branches are not separate acts of Faith, but should be all treated as interconnected values.

In spite of my ignorance and very poor knowledge, I have endeavoured to compile my book in true hope of salvation on the Day of Judgement by Allah. We pray to Allah, the Exalted, to reward us for this belief, to realise for us its fruits, to increase our Iman (Faith), to keep us on the Right Path to which He has guided us, and to bestow on us a blessing from Him, He is indeed the Giver. Praise and gratitude be to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds and peace and blessing be on the last Prophet Muhammad (SAW), his family, his Companions, and those who rightly follow them.

O Allah! Endear the Iman (Faith) to us, beautify it in our hearts, and make disbelief, wickedness and disobedience hateful to us. Our Lord Let not our hearts deviate (from the truth) after You have guided us, and grant us mercy from You. Truly, You are the Bestower. Our Lord! Punish us not if we forget or fall into error, our Lord! Lay not on

us a burden like that which You did lay on those before us; our Lord! Put not on us a burden greater than we have strength to bear. Pardon us and grant us Forgiveness. Have Mercy on us. You are our supporter and protector and give us victory over the disbelieving people.

I ask Allah, Lord of the worlds to accept this effort of mine and to add it to my record on the Day of Judgement, when neither wealth nor children will avail, except he who comes to Allah with a sound heart.

Wal Hamdu Lillahi Rubul Alameen.

Glossary of abreviations

SWT : *Subhanahu wa ta'ala*
How perfect and Exalted is He (i.e. Allah)

SAW : *Sallallaahu alaihi wa salam*
May Allah's Salat and salaam be upon him (Allah's Salat is to mention him to the highest company of angels)

RA : *Radhiyallahu anhu*
May Allah be pleased with him

RAHM : *Radhiyallahu anhuma*
May Allah be pleased with them two

RAM : *Radhiyallahu anhum*
May Allah be pleased with them all

RAH : *Rahimahullaah*
May Allah have mercy upon

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Branches of Faith

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